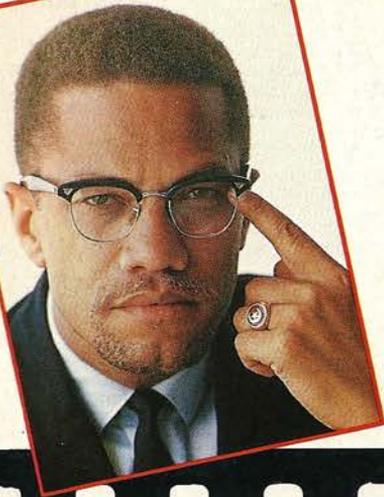


A TRIBUTE TO

MALCOLM X

THE MAN & THE LEGEND



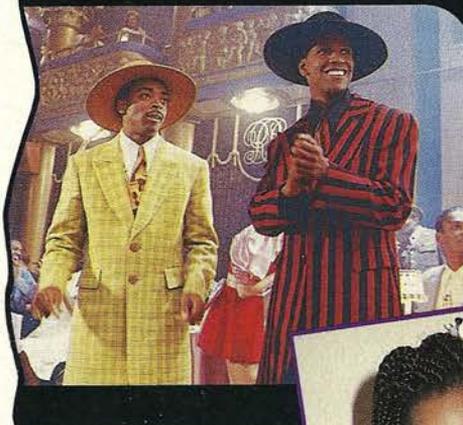
THE HISTORY OF MALCOLM X
The Events That Shaped Him From Childhood To Young Adult

SPECIAL CLOSING TRIBUTE BY MALCOLM X'S DAUGHTER ILYASAH SHABAZZ



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IN THIS WORLD, OF TOTAL
 CONFUSION
 BE CERTAIN Y'ALL'R NOT
 DISSED BY ILLUSION.
 THERE'S SOME PEOPLE OUT
 THERE
 WHO DON'T EVEN CARE
 'BOUT THE MESSAGE WE SEND
 AND IN THE END, WILL STEAL
 OUR COLOURS
 AND PRETEND
 TO BE BROTHERS
 BUT WE WANT IT UNDERSTOOD
 THAT ONLY **CROSS COLOURS** IS
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PHOTO: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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MALCOLM X: THE MAN AND THE LEGEND

Published by Word Up Video Inc. Publications, Inc., 63 Grand Avenue, River Edge, NJ 07661. (201) 487-6124.

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MALCOLM X

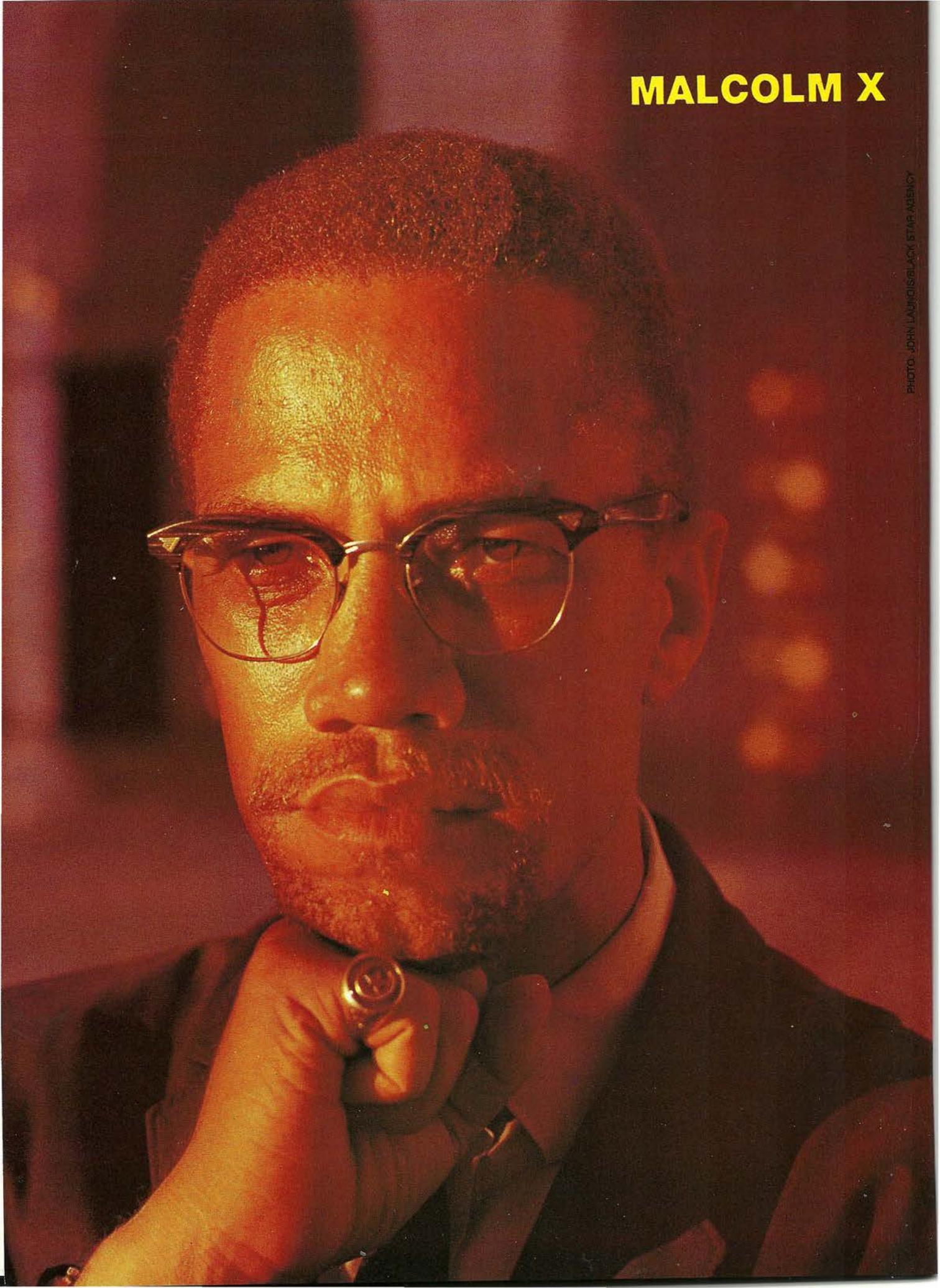


PHOTO: JOHN LAUNHOLSEL/SCY STAR AGENCY

MALCOLM X

AN EDITORIAL TRIBUTE

Although I grew up as a contemporary of Malcolm X, I remained unaware of him until I went to high school, his existence brought to me not through any of my history books in school, but via acquaintances who talked about him and made me aware of the Alex Haley book, *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X*.

Even then, however, I remained unaware of this great man's importance in my life until I moved on to college, his name, by this time, now legend, and his philosophy revealed to me through his speeches and interviews I saw on television shows, such as the one shown on *Like It Is*, hosted by journalist Gil Noble.

As I read more about Malcolm X, his image became more fixed in my mind, his existence more real to me, and I often chided myself for not having the foresight to have taken off the blinders earlier and seeking him out for myself. Still, I felt 'better late than never,' and I continued reading all I could about him, discussing his life with others who had an interest in him, until the making of the movie *Malcolm X* and my opportunity came to put this special tribute issue together.

Perhaps, the most outstanding thing about Malcolm X, to me, is the tremendous amount of integrity this man had in both his public and personal life. When I watched the episode of *Like It Is* which focused on Malcolm one Sunday afternoon, I was struck by how often government agencies such as the FBI and CIA had tried to dig up some dirt on him, and how just as often they failed to do so.

By now, everyone should realize how persistent the government can be in trying to destroy the credibility of Black leaders who do not support the status quo. It is no secret that J. Edgar Hoover, the violently feared and hated director of the FBI, collected files on practically every public official or personality in America, both Black and White, and used the information in them routinely when it was to his advantage to do so. Files on Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X's philosophical adversary in the beginning of his career,

helped to tarnish his image when he was labeled an incorrigible womanizer, which later led to the writing of a book long after he had died. On Malcolm, however, no files impugning his personal or public conduct could be collected save for the information detailing his former life as a hustler, pimp and petty criminal which he never hid from the world when he became a very public Minister of the Nation Of Islam.

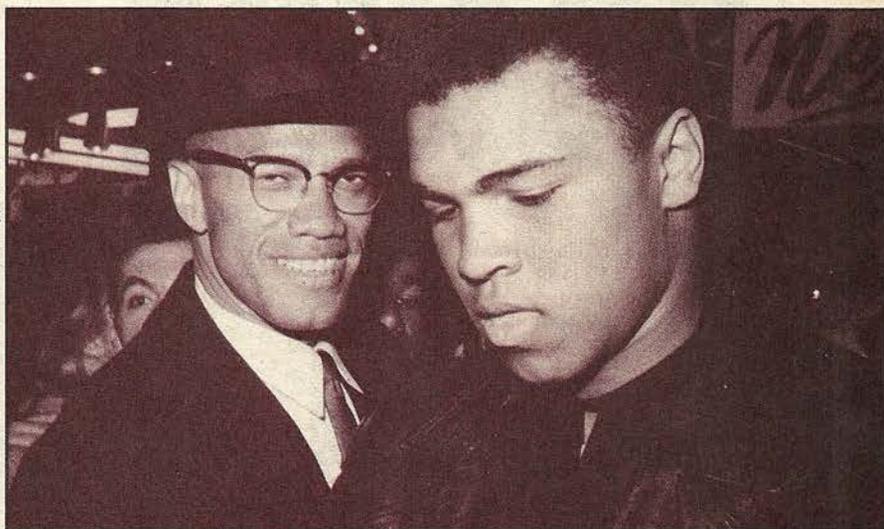
That Malcolm X was a man with faults we may not know about is a given. I am not naive enough to think him a perfect human being, but the source of my wonder about him is how he steadfastly remained true to the beliefs he voiced, living his life by the principles he embraced with nothing to hide from anyone.

An influential and charismatic man, Malcolm X affected the lives of many people around him. Whether a famous celebrity, such as Muhammad Ali, or ordinary people, such as some of my friends, Malcolm X had a powerful, lasting effect on those who came into contact with him personally or through the miracle of communication sources.

With the movie *Malcolm X*, a whole new generation of young people will be treated to the life story of a man who has become a modern icon. Director Spike Lee has said in interviews that making a film about Malcolm X was something he was born to do, Lee coming from a generation of young adults who, like myself, were just children when Malcolm X was alive. Today's hip-hop generation became interested in Malcolm X, due largely to the influence of the rappers who incorporated his image in their songs and discussions, the movement rooted in the pro-Black wave of '60s nostalgia sweeping the country, buoyed by African-Americans, renewed interest in Black history and culture.

That nostalgia also grew out of the lack of effective Black leadership in the '80s and '90s, characterized by the seeming reversal of most of the legislative victories won by Blacks during the civil rights era. With the documenting of more and more cases of institutional racism, biased crimes and confrontations between minorities and the police, heroes of the past, such as Malcolm X have provided a voice to articulate the feelings of powerlessness, anger and pain felt by Black people. Betrayed by a government which has paid only lip service to the laws it enacted after the Civil Rights Movement of the '60s, Black people have come full circle under the oppressive racial tension which characterizes today's society.

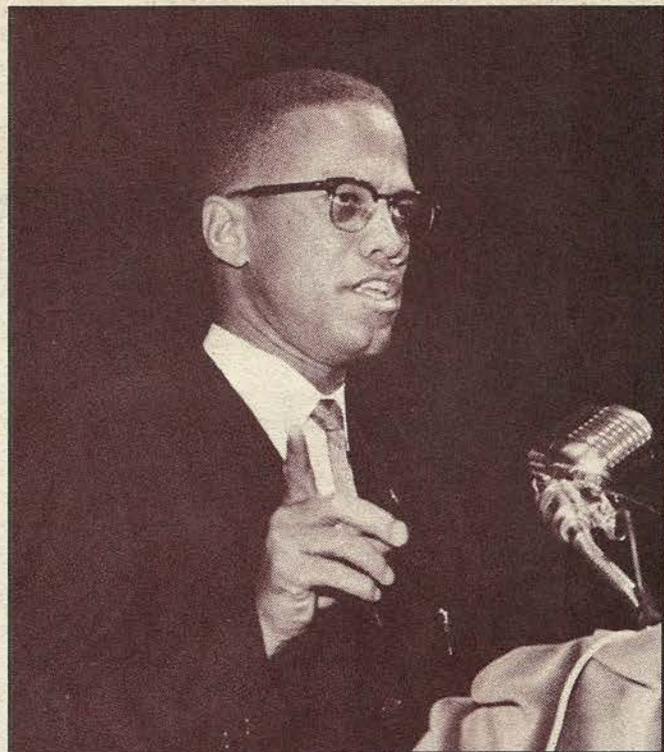
A symbol of a strong, uncompromising Black Leader, Malcolm X exerts an appeal to Black people today, especially our youth, which stems from his refusal to be broken by the racist society he lived in. Malcolm X fought that system until his death, at the age of 39, and in so doing lives forever in our hearts and minds as the kind of person we would most like to be.



Malcolm X influenced the lives of both the famous, such as Muhammad Ali and many everyday people. And although he was most often seen as a serious political figure, he had a lighter side which didn't preclude him from enjoying the simple pleasure of being photographed with the "champ."

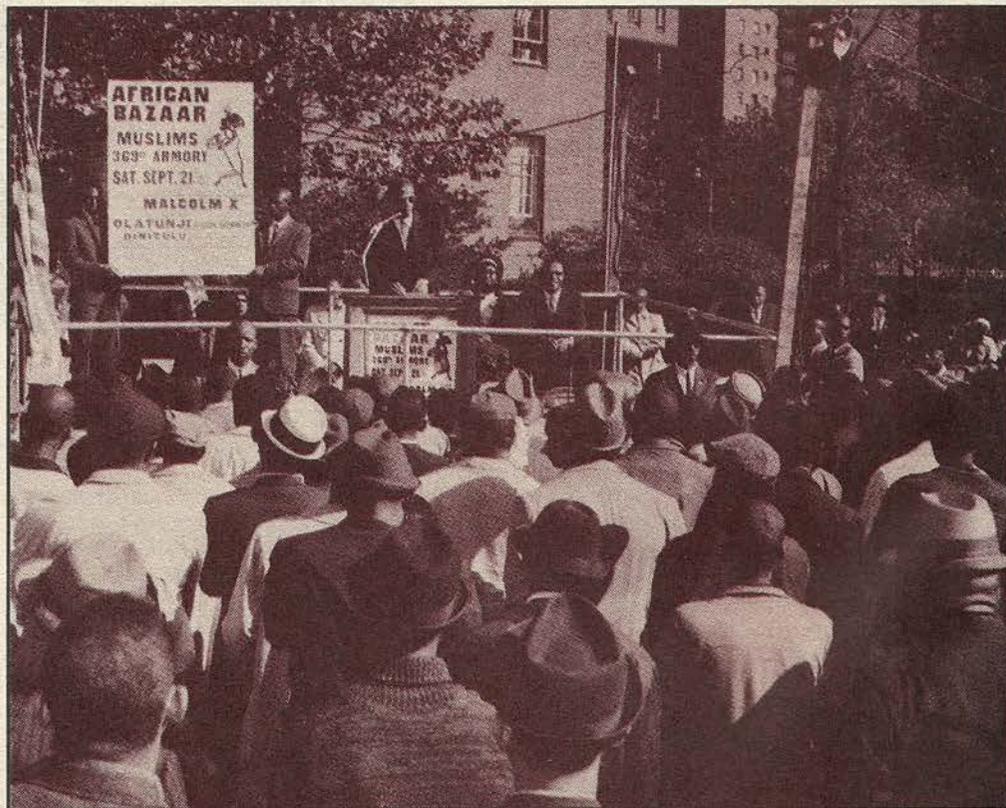
KATE FERGUSON
EDITOR

THE HISTORY OF MALCOLM X



Malcolm X addresses the national convention of Black Muslims in Chicago taking the place of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad who was ill. Malcolm had become an indispensable asset to the Nation Of Islam and was Mr. Muhammad's most trusted Minister. The charismatic Malcolm, however, could hold a crowd spellbound as no other could.

From the moment Malcolm X burst into the public's consciousness, articulating his perspective on race relations and the status of African-Americans in society, American social politics changed forever. He turned the tables on White America's conventional assumption of its role in society by stating that Blacks were morally, physically and intellectually superior to Whites who would, therefore, assume their rightful place at the top of society before too long. Needless to say, this position, coming especially at that time in America, earned Malcolm X many enemies, reflected in his lifelong war with a media which misquoted and misread him causing the misunderstanding of a man who refused to compromise his beliefs and philosophies for any reason.



A fiery and outspoken speaker, Malcolm X used his prominent position to speak out against government policies such as the one he addressed a crowd of 1,000 persons about during an outdoor rally in upper Manhattan in New York City. He accused the government of trying to deceive Blacks by giving them token integration.



PHOTO: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

A people person, Malcolm X took time to sign autographs during the Negro Parade in Washington, D.C. on June 14, 1963. Malcolm X's admirers and supporters responded enthusiastically to his public appearances.

Malcolm X was born in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska into a racially-divided society that treated him and his family with cruelty and indifference. After the murder of his father, the Reverend Earl Little, Malcolm's family, little by little, was torn apart, his mother, Louise Little, finally succumbing to the awesome pressures and suffering a complete nervous breakdown which resulted in the children being taken from her and put into foster care when she was sent to a mental institution.

With his white foster family, Malcolm was treated kindly, in the same way, perhaps, as a treasured pet, but without any true appreciation for his humanity and intelligence. In school, he was an excellent student, however that ended the day he was told by a teacher that he should not aspire to be the lawyer he wanted to become as Blacks could not, realistically, aim for goals which were beyond them. Malcolm was told that he should become a carpenter or something, and immediately after, his love affair with academics ended, his life as a juvenile delinquent

beginning and taking him into young adulthood.

After moving East to live with a relative, Malcolm became a teenaged hustler on the streets of Boston's Roxbury district, using the name Detroit Red (in reference to his red hair and the time he spent in a Michigan detention home) and selling drugs and women until he was imprisoned on a burglary charge.

In prison, Malcolm's reputation for being ill-tempered and vicious earned him the nickname Satan, but after his brother, Reginald, introduced him to the philosophies of the Nation of Islam, he became a changed man. Malcolm's transformation was a complete rejection of his previous lifestyle. Now, he no longer drank, used profanities, dressed flamboyantly or acquired money from criminal enterprises. Most importantly, however, was the revamping of Malcolm's philosophy, the importance of Islam in shaping his life and guiding his destiny, and the community activism in which he now became involved.

At the time, the philosophy of the Nation of Islam supported the idea that

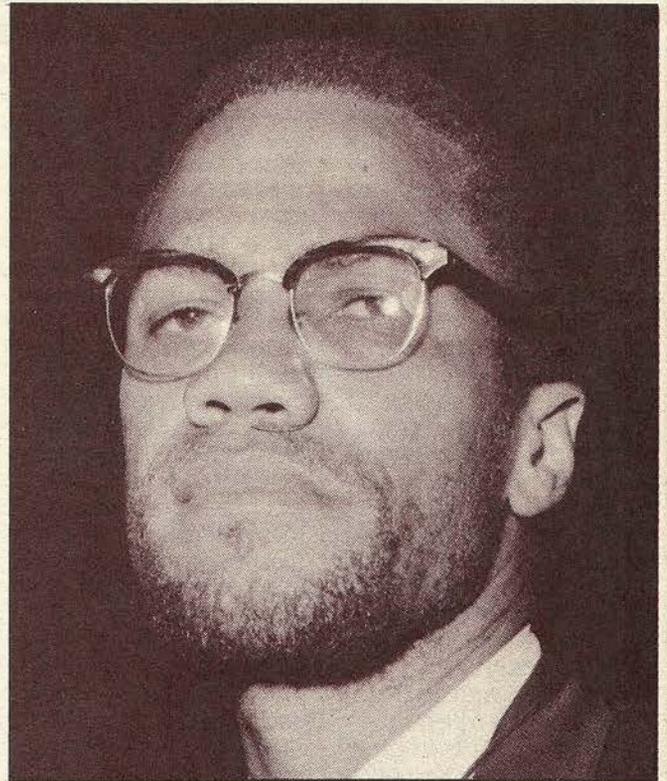
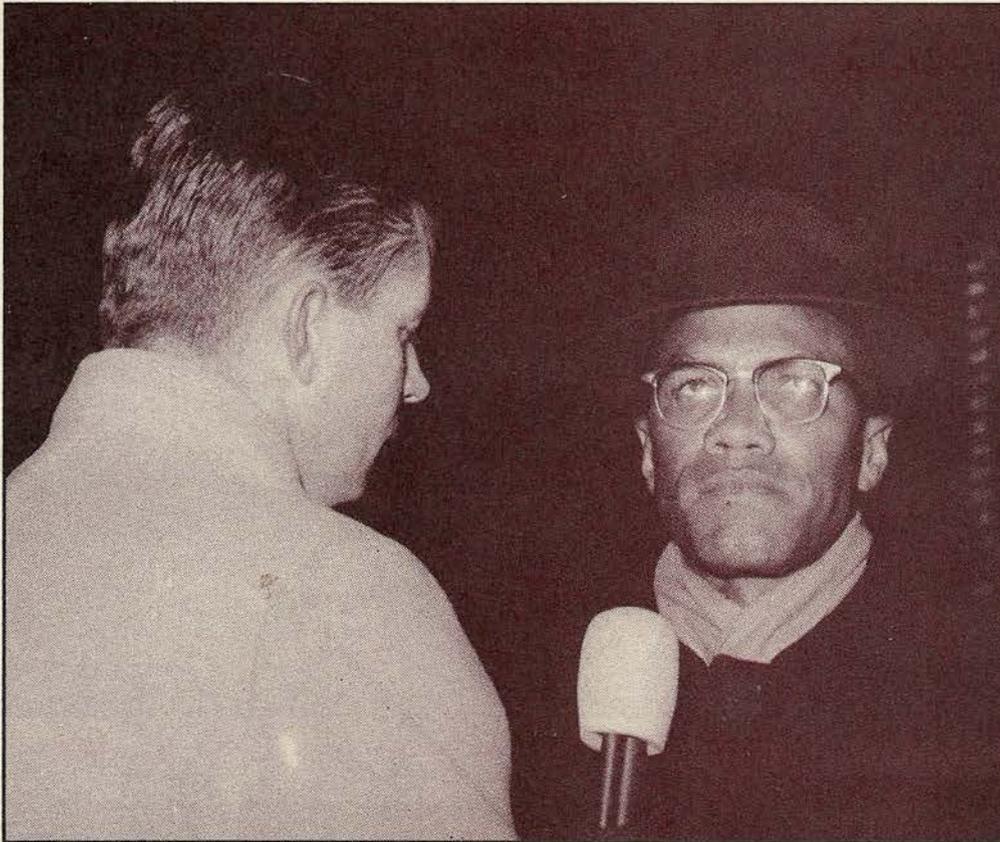


PHOTO: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

This photo was taken when Malcolm X was suspended by Elijah Muhammad for statements he made about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Malcolm had told a Black Muslim rally that the assassination was an instance of "the chickens coming home to roost," a comment which netted him negative publicity when the press interpreted it as a sign that he was unsympathetic about Kennedy's murder. Malcolm's comment, however, had been taken out of context. What he meant was that America's easy acceptance of violence when targeted toward Blacks, was now killing even prominent leaders in the white community.



Malcolm X at a press conference in the Hotel Theresa in New York City. Regarded with suspicion by the mainstream press, Malcolm X suffered a major character assassination at their hands with him painted as a violent racist who hated all Whites.

people of color are God's chosen, the only ones who can enter heaven and who are naturally superior to the "White devils" who tried to enslave them in Western society. Because of his negative life experiences with White people, Malcolm was easily able to accept this belief, the discipline of the Nation Of Islam and its work ethic acting as a motivational force to uplift the race through study, a knowledge of history, a raising of self-esteem and self-confidence and an active participation in the politics affecting the Black community.

In keeping with his new beliefs, Malcolm disowned his surname of Little taking instead the letter X to signify his rejection of a "White man's slave name" and his past as a non-Islamic person. By the time he left prison in 1952, after serving a little over six years of his 8-10-year sentence, Malcolm X had metamorphosized into a man of learning, articulate and well-spoken, educated and cultured, a fitting spokesperson for his reli-

gion, prepared to dedicate the rest of his life to the service of his faith and the progress of his people.

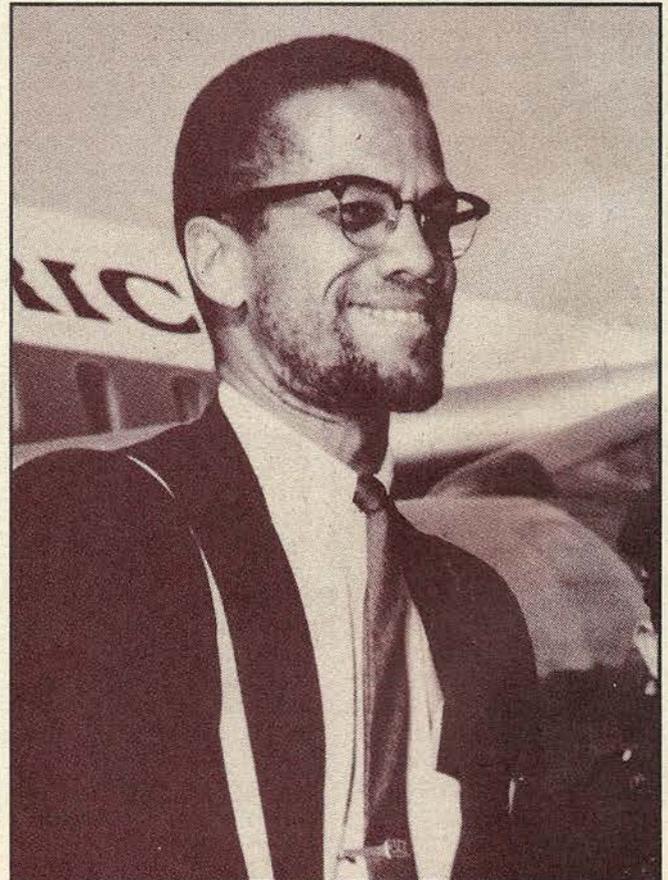
Malcolm X's incisive mind, polished speech and sophisticated wit raised him immediately to the forefront of the NOI organization, making him a more visible spokesman than even Elijah Muhammad. His assertions that Blacks deserved and would assume equal treatment in America, "by any means necessary," both shocked and fascinated the country.

For Whites, it was a chance to see and hear a Black man who did not grovel, beg or seek to placate them. He spoke with the language of the most educated men of any race, and with a social vision as unsettling as it was new, he exposed racism in all aspects of life and asserted the fundamental right of all men to be treated with dignity and respect.

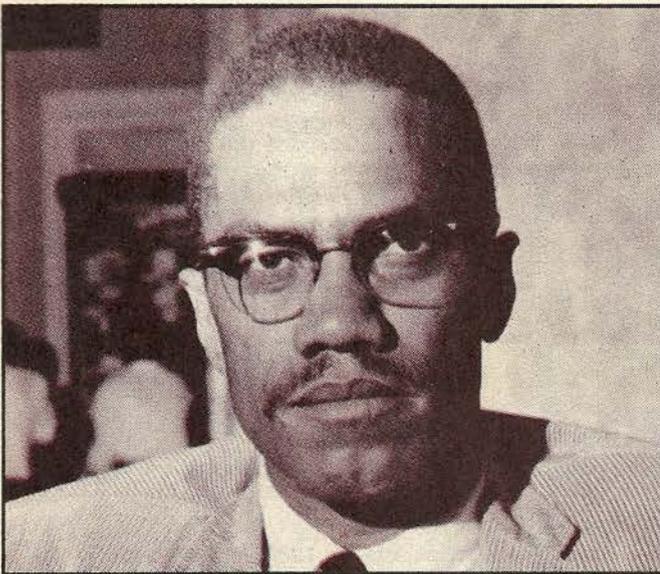
For Blacks, Malcolm X represented a strong leader figure who was a source of inspiration and motivation

for them. His association with the Nation Of Islam prompted many people to joining the organization representing as did Malcolm X a wellspring of hope for Black people tired of the feelings of powerlessness which threatened to drown their spirits.

Despite Malcolm's devotion to the Nation Of Islam, however, his charismatic personality engendered petty jealousies from some within the organization and he soon was at odds with even his former mentor, Elijah Muhammad, the man he respected and revered above all others. The rift ended with the expulsion of Malcolm X from the Nation Of Islam and in response he decided to travel to the Middle East and discover the roots of Islam for himself. Malcolm X went to Mecca, making the hajj, or religious pilgrimage, to the Holy City and for the first time encountered Muslims of all races, Islamic worshippers who welcomed him and shared his religious beliefs and hopes for his race.



Malcolm X arriving at New York's Kennedy International Airport after his second trip to Africa and the Middle East.



After Malcolm X split with the Nation Of Islam, he announced his intention to form a united Negro front in the United States to help gain the support of the African nations to bring the "plight the Afro-American Negroes" before the United Nations. To help do just that, Malcolm X planned to call a private meeting of various Black leaders to form a single civil rights organization.

The pilgrimage was another turning point in Malcolm X's life. A man of strong convictions and unshakeable faith, Malcolm X still nurtured his need for growing and evolving beyond the confines of his immediate awareness. Always searching for the truth, Malcolm X realized that a certain openmindedness and receptivity to new ideas and philosophies was a necessary prerequisite for personal evolution. The visit to Mecca provided an opportunity for Malcolm X to experience that personal growth which widened his vision to accept truths heretofore unrevealed to him, and the incident lifted him to a new state of consciousness, one in which he realized the potential for brotherhood among people of all races.

Formerly a radical believer in the inferiority of the White race, Malcolm's new vision tempered this absolutist viewpoint mellowing it into an embracing of the idea that there are good people in all races with the quality of a person's spirit determining his worth, not the color of his skin. Malcolm X now espoused the cause of brotherhood

and human rights for everyone, with his humanist agenda making an impact worldwide as he grew in stature in the eyes of politicians in the international arena.

In 1964, Malcolm X formed the Organization for Afro-American Unity, his expression of the vision he wanted to create. At the time, Malcolm X was beginning to draw closer with Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr., his contemporary and non-violent mirror image. Because of the perceived potential of an alliance, there are those who hint that the powers that be were extremely uneasy about such an alliance. With Martin Luther King, Jr. viewed as a more tolerant Black leader with his philosophy of passive resistance, politicians did not view him as much of a threat as Malcolm X, who was perceived to be a militant who was not averse to taking up arms to liberate his people if he deemed that necessary.

Ironically, there are those who indicate that as Malcolm X grew less militant, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s patience was running out and he was growing increasingly more extreme in his philosophy and outlook on methods for engendering change. Out of these circumstances, then, it is easy to imagine the consternation of government officials interested in maintaining the status quo. If Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were to join forces, the unified strength of the two leaders might possibly pose a serious threat to those in power.

Nevertheless, as actor Al Freeman, Jr. says, he is one of those leery of the con-

spiracy theory which developed out of this explanation of things leading up to the events of February 21, 1965.

On February 14, of that year, Malcolm X's home in Queens, New York was fire-bombed by unknown assailants. Malcolm X had become the victim of death threats during the last few years of his life, and the Queens attack left his home in ruins, destroyed by the gasoline bombs thrown through the building's front window.

One week later, Malcolm X was gunned down during a rally held at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, in New York City. He was just 39 years old.

Today, Malcolm X lives on in legend and spirit, his philosophy a source of inspiration and motivation to a whole new generation of young people desperately in need of guidance in their search for the truth and a way to solve the problems of our time. His charisma still intact even in death, Malcolm X has affected millions of people who never ever met him, some of them those who never heard of him until recently. That is the influence of the man, and what makes him continue to live on in the hearts, minds and lives of so many people.



Malcolm X with Saudi Arabia's King Faisal. The Black nationalist leader was now a recognized voice in international affairs, a state of affairs which had made the U.S. government

X-TREMELY IMPORTANT FAX ABOUT MALCOLM X

BORN: May 19, 1925

BIRTHPLACE: Omaha, Nebraska

NAME: Malcolm Little

PARENTS: Louise Little and the Reverend Earl Little

BROTHERS & SISTERS: Ella, Earl, Mary, Hilda, Philbert, Reginald, Yvonne, Wesley and Robert

TRAGEDY: Malcolm X's father was killed in 1931 after being threatened by White supremacists. By 1937, Malcolm's family was separated, the children placed in foster care by the state. In 1946, Malcolm, now a petty criminal, was imprisoned for burglary and sentenced to 8-10 years in Massachusetts. He served 6 1/2 years of his sentence in the process educating himself and transforming himself into the man he was to become.

TRANSFORMATION: In the years from 1948-1949, Malcolm X converted to Islam. In 1952, he was paroled from prison, and the next year he renamed himself Malcolm X when he became an Assistant Minister of the Nation Of Islam Temple in Detroit. In 1954, Malcolm X moved to New York to become the Minister of the Harlem Temple.

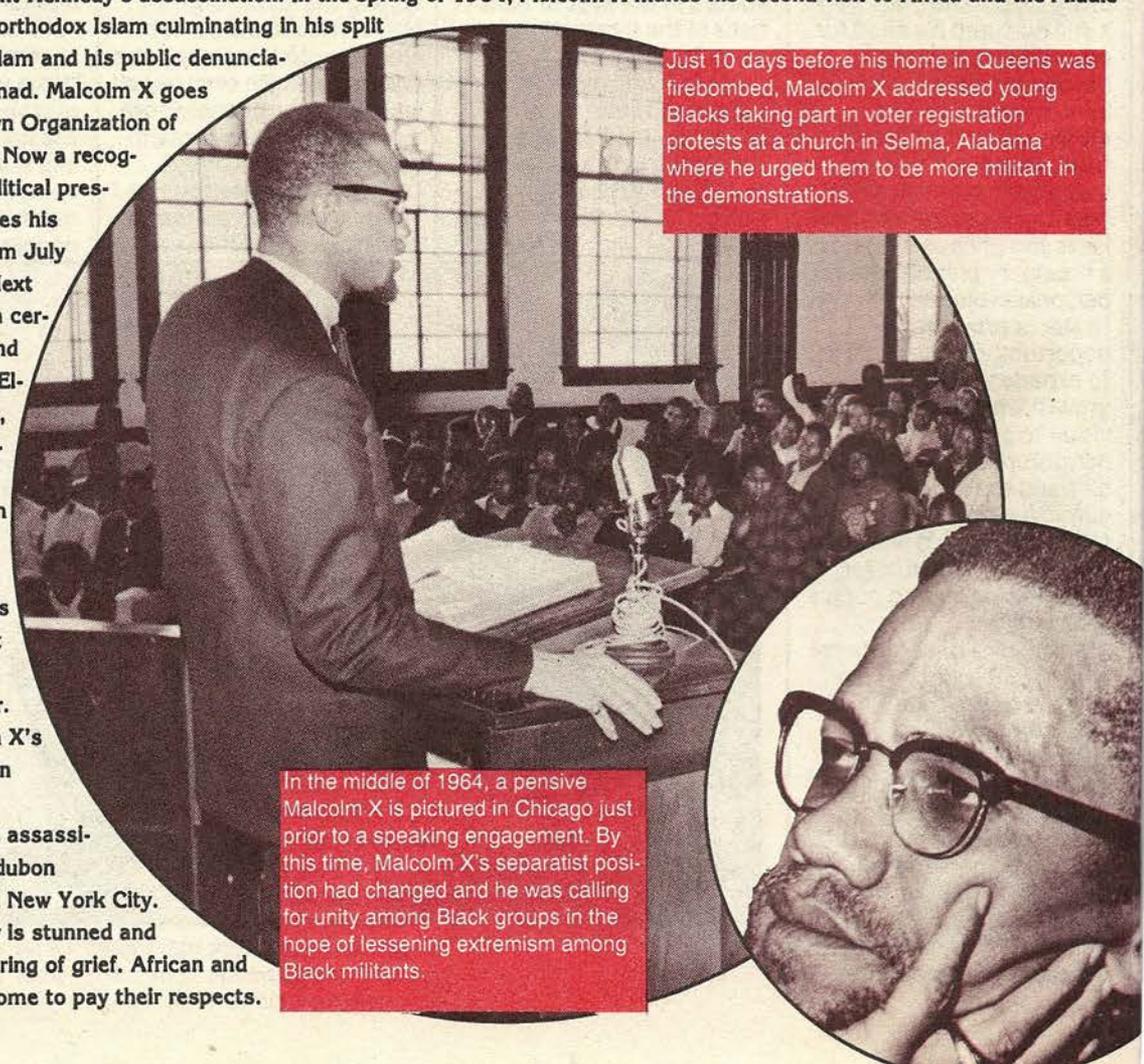
POLITICIZATION: Malcolm X makes his first trip to the Middle East and Africa.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: In 1963, Malcolm X begins his collaboration with Alex Haley on his autobiography.

INDEPENDENCE: In April, 1963, Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad engage in a confrontation about Mr. Muhammad's private life. The close ties between the two men begin to unravel. Later that year, Malcolm X is reprimanded after making "unauthorized" remarks after President Kennedy's assassination. In the spring of 1964, Malcolm X makes his second visit to Africa and the Middle East and converts to orthodox Islam culminating in his split from the Nation Of Islam and his public denunciation of Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm X goes on to establish his own Organization of Afro-American Unity. Now a recognized international political presence, Malcolm X makes his third trip to Africa from July to November, 1964. Next Malcolm X becomes a certified Sunni Muslim and changes his name to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, his previously unyielding position on Whites' involvement in the Civil Rights Movement now more inclusive as well as his support of non-violent leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

REPRISALS: Malcolm X's home is firebombed on February 14, 1965.

DEATH: Malcolm X is assassinated, shot in the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem in New York City. The Black community is stunned and reacts with an outpouring of grief. African and Middle East leaders come to pay their respects.



Just 10 days before his home in Queens was firebombed, Malcolm X addressed young Blacks taking part in voter registration protests at a church in Selma, Alabama where he urged them to be more militant in the demonstrations.

In the middle of 1964, a pensive Malcolm X is pictured in Chicago just prior to a speaking engagement. By this time, Malcolm X's separatist position had changed and he was calling for unity among Black groups in the hope of lessening extremism among Black militants.

MALCOLM

X

WORD SEARCH

A L E X H A L E Y Y R S F G H A D R E T Z D
 E A C T R G U H K J L T M O P Q E Y B C P E
 D N A T I O N O F I S L A M B N A T A S A T
 U W T H O T E A T I O N A U D G T V O T H R
 C J F F G L M O N P Q L R S T P E N C Z I O
 A H O P A N G A E L C O E L R B T W E O D I
 T A P R I L M W H O S I N I T H E H E O L T
 I M O S Q U E N L A E Z N M O J U E R T A R
 O T H A H N Y M A N L Z M E E T R V I S B E
 N T S E O N L A E N F A I Z A C G A M U E D
 P E R N E I I W H O D B I S H E C A N I D W
 I H W A T N B N A V E A Y D T H S A I T A H
 T E H T A M R I S C F H R I A G E B U T S H
 K J L T V O A R G L E S Y R A D B H L I W E
 T E O F T H R E P O N Y P A L L A H U L A R
 H C T I M E Y T A H S T I P U O R G K C O R
 E M I N I S T E R S E T S C I T I L O P W I
 R E B O T C O D N A L E G A R E V E T S Z T
 S E L F H E L P O R D B A L Q J U S T W H O
 R E G B R A D F S K A E P S D A M M A H U M
 I N T H E H E L H F K J B C D P F R I D A Y
 A U D U B O N B A L L R O O M R G K N A H T

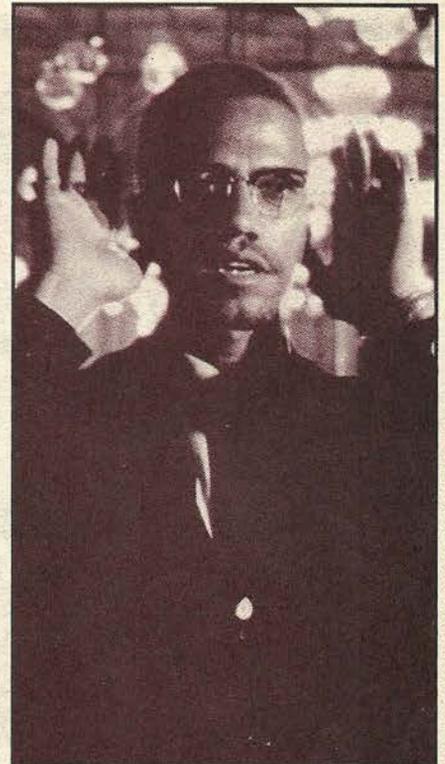


PHOTO: JOHN LAUNOIS/BLACK STAR AGENCY

MALCOLM X

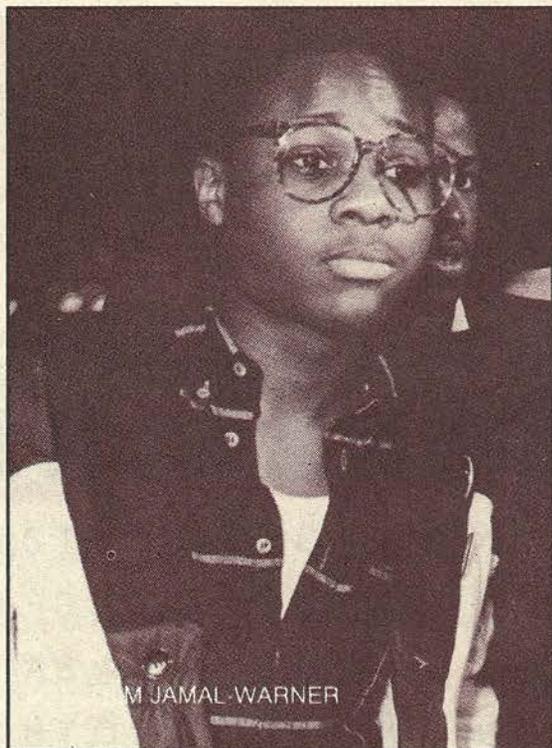
Find and circle all 20 words, phrases, names, and places having to do with Malcolm X. The words may appear forward, backward, up, down or diagonally. Sometimes letters of certain words appear within other words. Cross off the names as you locate them in the puzzle.

- NATION OF ISLAM
- MUSLIM
- MECCA
- AUDUBON BALLROOM
- DETROIT RED
- MALCOLM LITTLE
- BETTY SHABAZZ
- MOSQUE
- ALEX HALEY
- SATAN
- ALLAH
- ZOOT SUIT
- MINISTER
- EDUCATION
- LIBRARY
- MUHAMMAD SPEAKS
- SELF-DEFENSE
- SELF-HELP
- POLITICS
- HUMANIST

THE MALCOLM X LEGACY

Hip-Hop's Heroes Speak

PHOTO: CHUCK P./STARFILE



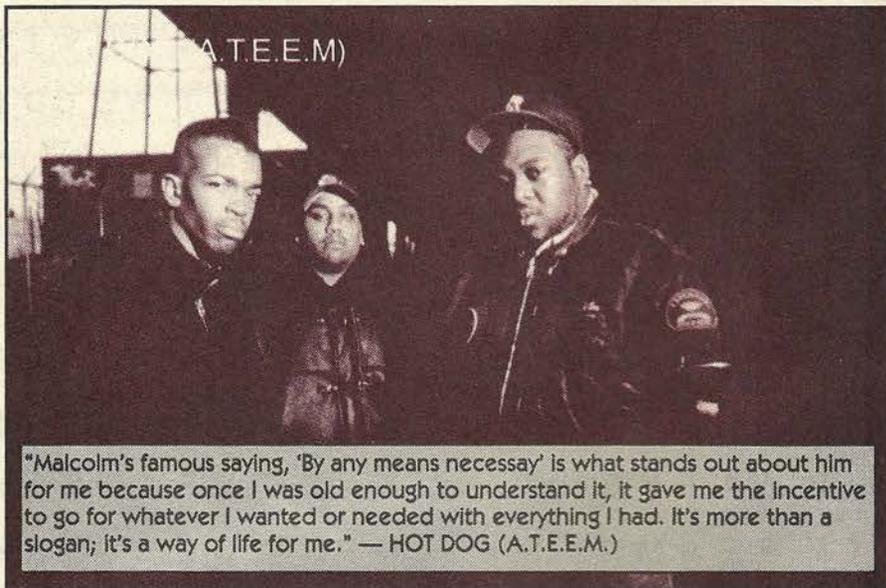
M. JAMAL WARNER

"Personally, it saddens me that people today don't really understand who Malcolm X was. Unfortunately, the media focuses on only one aspect of his philosophies and, thus, young people misinterpret that and use it as an excuse to support unnecessary violence. To me, Malcolm X was the epitome of courage in that he had the courage to stand up and speak out for what he felt was the truth (the White man was the devil), but more importantly, upon his return from Mecca, he had the courage to admit to his people that the true Muslim faith proved that theory to be wrong. What people do not see is the intellectual, eloquent side of this brilliant Black man." — MALCOLM JAMAL-WARNER

The influence that Malcolm X has had on the hip-hop culture has been a phenomenal thing, especially when you consider that Malcolm has been dead for almost 30 years. "Young Blacks love Malcolm X almost to the point of uncritical adoration," said James Cone, professor of systemic theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York and author of *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare*, in an article in *Ebony* Magazine. "He expresses the anger they feel about White America and about the Black leadership establishment. That is why Malcolm is popular among rap artists and street-preachers and why his image, and sayings adorn buttons, caps and T-shirts."

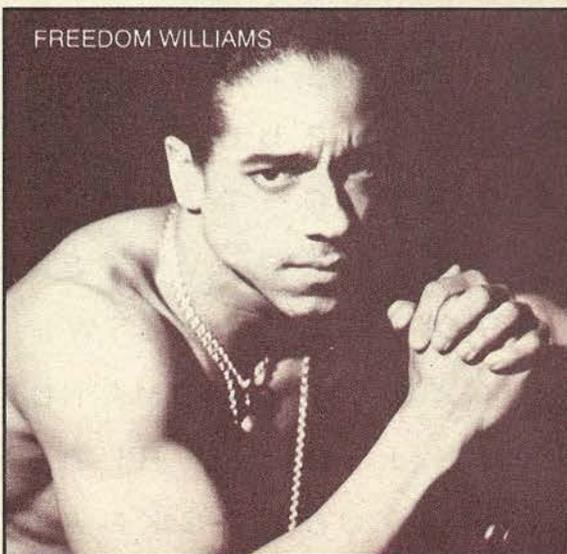
Indeed the interest in Malcolm X among members of the hip-hop community amounts to almost a devotion to a man who has become an icon in our culture. Because of the perception of Malcolm X as a "militant" Black man who preached a gospel of empowerment "by any means necessary," his philosophy (or more accurately, what people assume his philosophy to be) has laid a foundation for the opinions and actions of many young people in the Black community.

To the Black youth of today, rappers are the heroes who they look up to. Their words in song are carefully digested and so naturally the artists' regard for Malcolm X on a personal level influences young people's opinions of a man who impacted on the world around him and died for his beliefs on a cold ballroom floor in Harlem so many years ago.



(A.T.E.E.M.)

"Malcolm's famous saying, 'By any means necessary' is what stands out about him for me because once I was old enough to understand it, it gave me the incentive to go for whatever I wanted or needed with everything I had. It's more than a slogan; it's a way of life for me." — HOT DOG (A.T.E.E.M.)



FREEDOM WILLIAMS

"Malcolm is known for such a myriad of important and positive things that it's an injustice to try and limit comments about him to just a few lines. However, his very existence permeates the metaphor of human struggle. But in logic, we are as assessable as the philosopher. I must say that he personified for every ounce of struggle, you must have achievement as a balance. As Frederick Douglass said, 'Without struggle, there is no progress.'" — FREEDOM WILLIAMS

PHOTO: KEN NAHOUN/COURTESY COLUMBIA

CHUCK D.

PHOTO: P. CO

CHUCK'S

"...Malcolm X is important to place in the realm of things in rap. I want people to read Malcolm as much as possible, but also to study the leadership of today in themselves, too. And the only way you can do that is to be the best person you can be. We have leadership, but we need to acknowledge it and recognize these people."



AFRIKA BAMBAATAA

PHOTO: ERNEST PANICCIOLI

AFRIKA BAMBAATAA

"Malcolm was a person who I loved with the utmost respect to himself and the teacher who taught him, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. He was a warrior for the Black cause and that of humanity. To understand Malcolm, you must understand the whole man, his beliefs, ways and actions. As far as I'm concerned, Malcolm, Martin Luther King, Marcus Garvey, Sojourner Truth, all of the great Black leaders of yesterday, are now in the great Minister Louis Farrakhan, the Malcolm of today."

HEAVY D.



HEAVY D.

"After reading the biography of Malcolm X (by Alex Haley), about a year and a half ago, I was inspired to be more aware of myself, more introspective. Like Malcolm did after he became enlightened, I wanted to dig deeper into who I was. So I started reading more, carrying a dictionary and caring more about educating myself on a personal and professional level. That's what learning about Malcolm X did for me."



DOUG E. FRESH

"Malcolm X is the strongest role model Black people ever had. Nobody else gave us the insight, knowledge and determination to see ourselves as we really are, not like White people thought we should be. All people, Black, White, Asian, Latin, whatever, owe him a lot. I just hope someday everybody will realize how much he changed the world."

DOUG E. FRESH

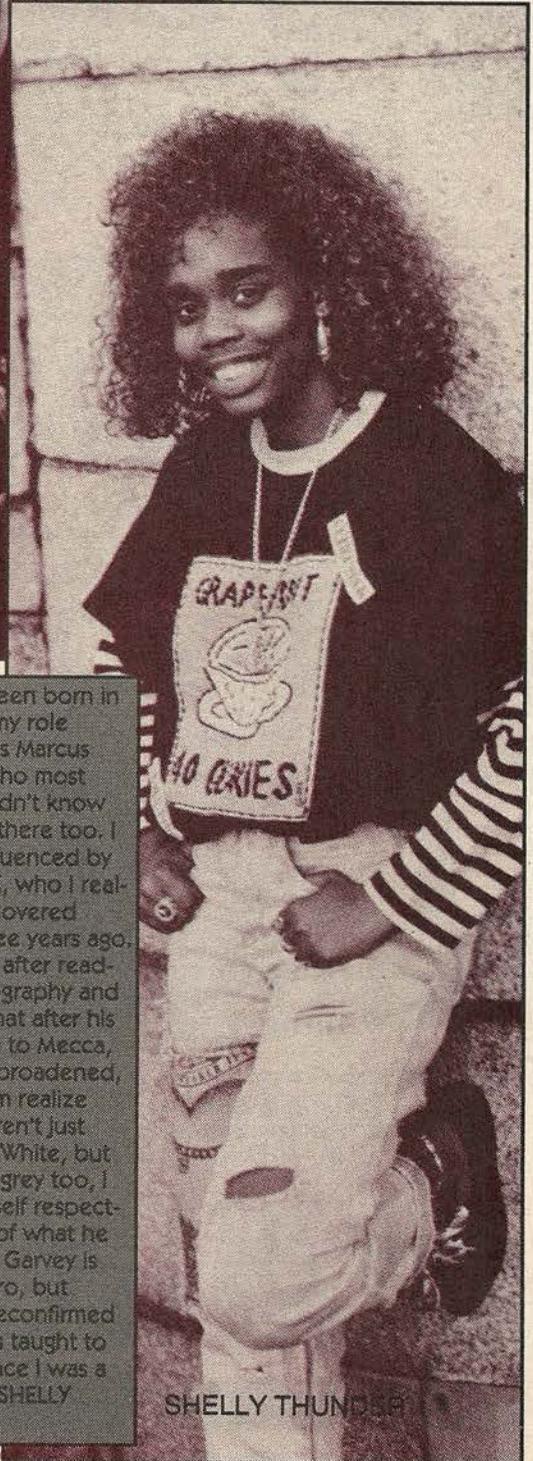
PHOTO: SHARON BATT/COURTESY TERRIE WILLIAMS AGENCY



BOWLEGGED LOU (FULL FORCE)

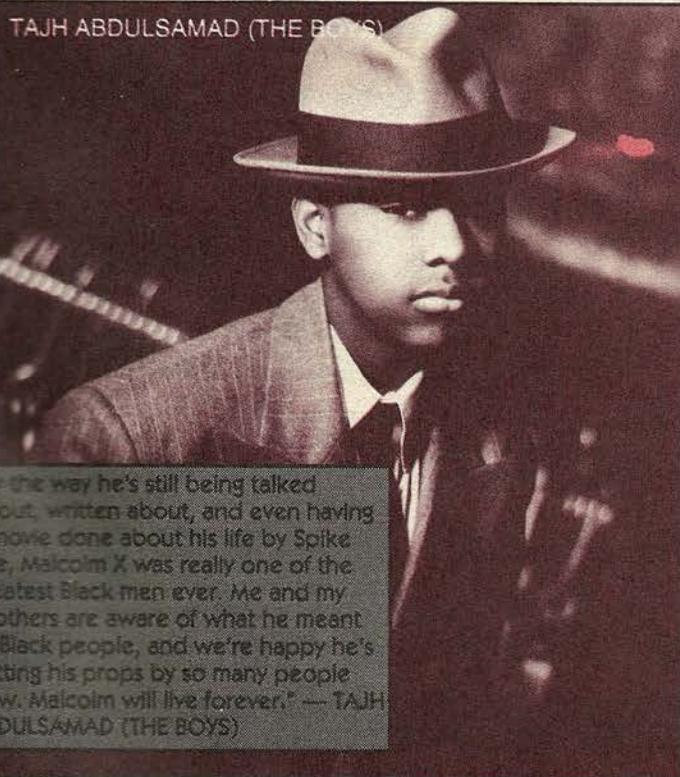
"Malcolm X helped strengthen Black awareness, and make it a worldwide issue. One of Malcolm's philosophies that I truly admired was when he said Blacks should get into developing and owning their own businesses, and that we as Blacks should support each other and keep the dollars in the Black community." — BOWLEGGED LOU (FULL FORCE)

PHOTO: JONNIE MILES/COURTESY MANGO



SHELLY THUNDER

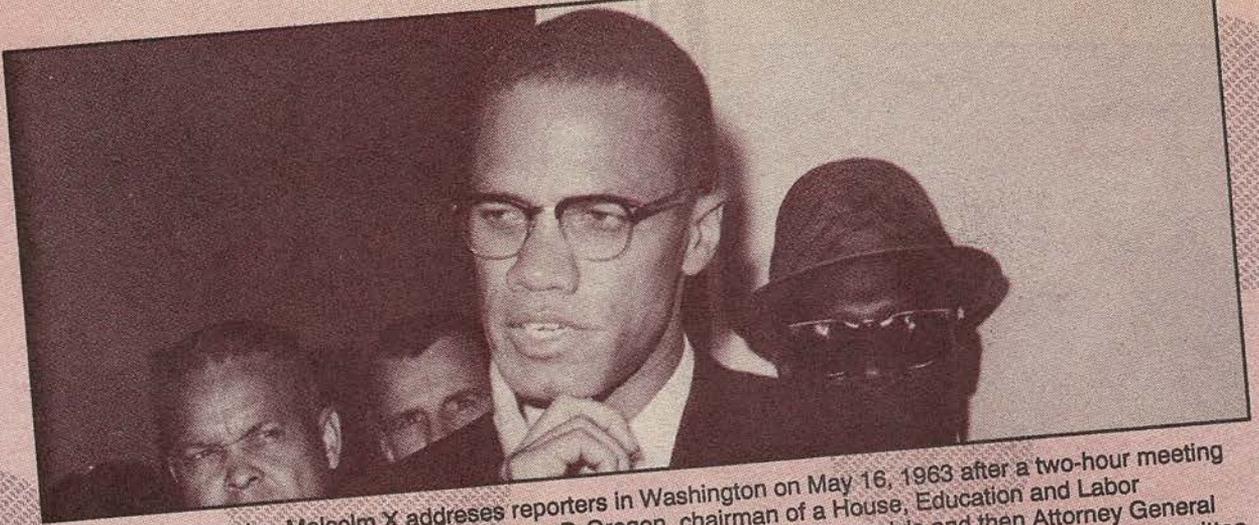
PHOTO: COURTESY MOTOWN RECORDS



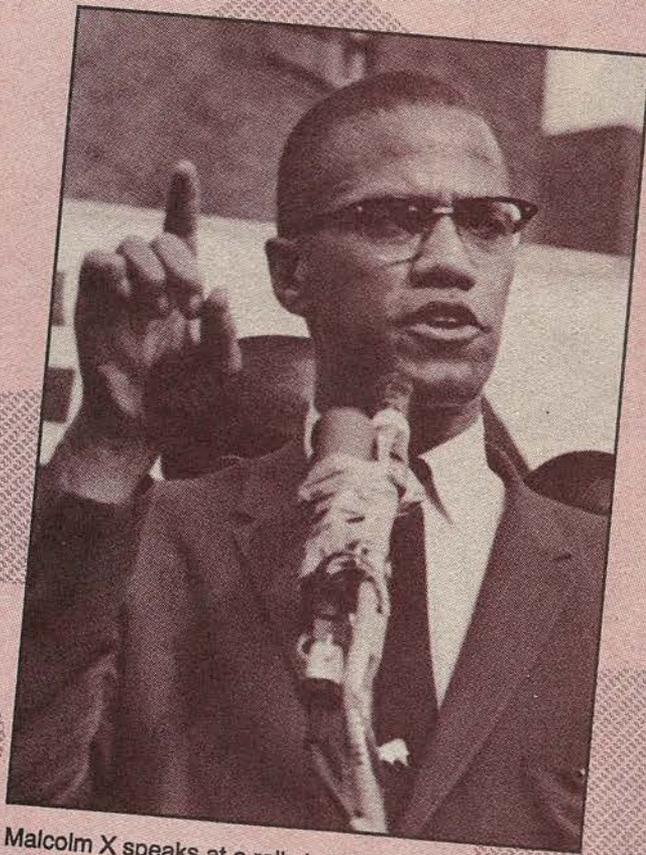
TAJH ABDULSAMAD (THE BOYS)

"Having been born in Jamaica, my role model was Marcus Garvey, who most people didn't know was from there too. I wasn't influenced by Malcolm X, who I really just discovered about three years ago. However, after reading his biography and learning that after his pilgrimage to Mecca, his ideals broadened, making him realize things weren't just Black and White, but shades of grey too, I found myself respecting much of what he stood for. Garvey is still my hero, but Malcolm reconfirmed what I was taught to believe since I was a child." — SHELLY THUNDER

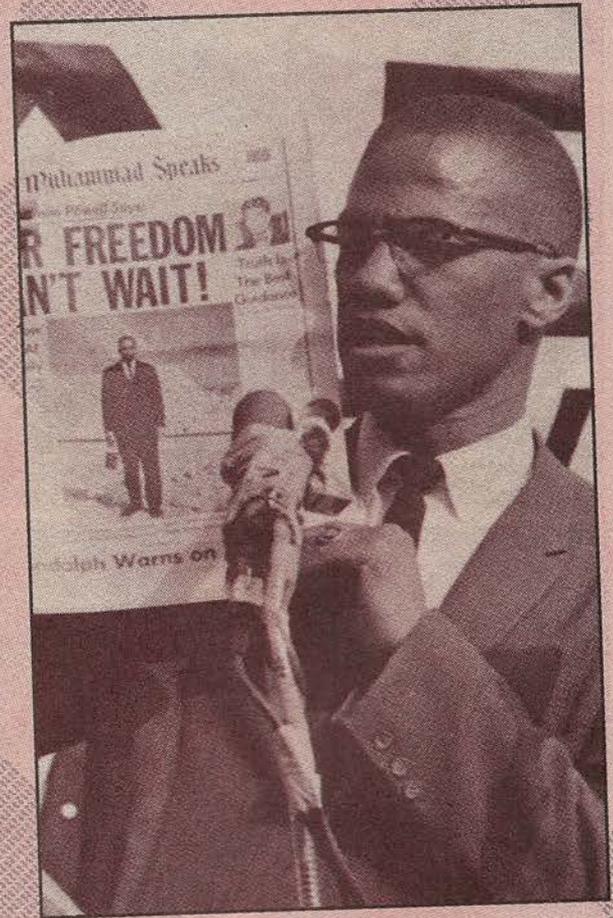
"By the way he's still being talked about, written about, and even having a movie done about his life by Spike Lee, Malcolm X was really one of the greatest Black men ever. Me and my brothers are aware of what he meant to Black people, and we're happy he's getting his props by so many people now. Malcolm will live forever." — TAJH ABDULSAMAD (THE BOYS)



An outspoken leader, Malcolm X addresses reporters in Washington on May 16, 1963 after a two-hour meeting on juvenile delinquency with Rep. Edith Green, D-Oregon, chairman of a House, Education and Labor Subcommittee. While talking to the press, Malcolm criticized President Kennedy's and then Attorney General Robert Kennedy's handling of the racial situation in Birmingham, Alabama, also charging that the subcommittee had denied him a public hearing because of trouble in Birmingham.



Malcolm X speaks at a rally in Harlem on June 29, 1963. At this point, Malcolm's popularity as a charismatic public speaker was fully established.

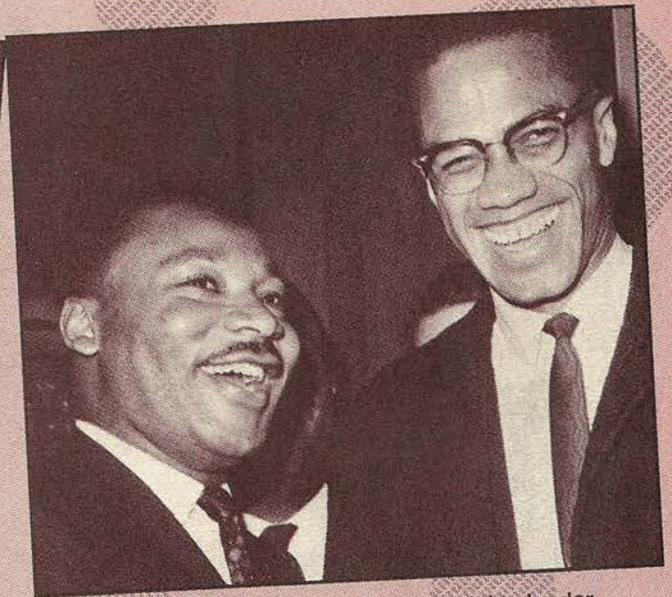


A copy of *Muhammad Speaks*, the paper he helped to found, in his hands, Malcolm X speaks at a Black Muslim rally in New York City.

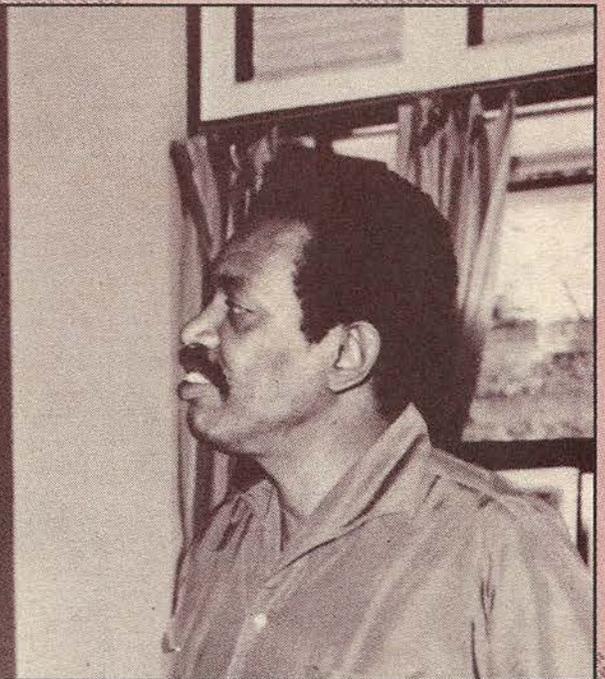
MALCOLM X'S



By Elijah Muhammad's own words, he found Malcolm X to be his greatest minister. A mesmerizing orator, Malcolm had the gift of holding an audience spellbound at his speeches. Here, the Minister makes a point.



By March of 1964, Malcolm X and civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. had buried the hatchet and were moving toward a coalition uniting all the philosophical and political Black leaders under one platform — that of racial equality for all.



PHOTOS: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

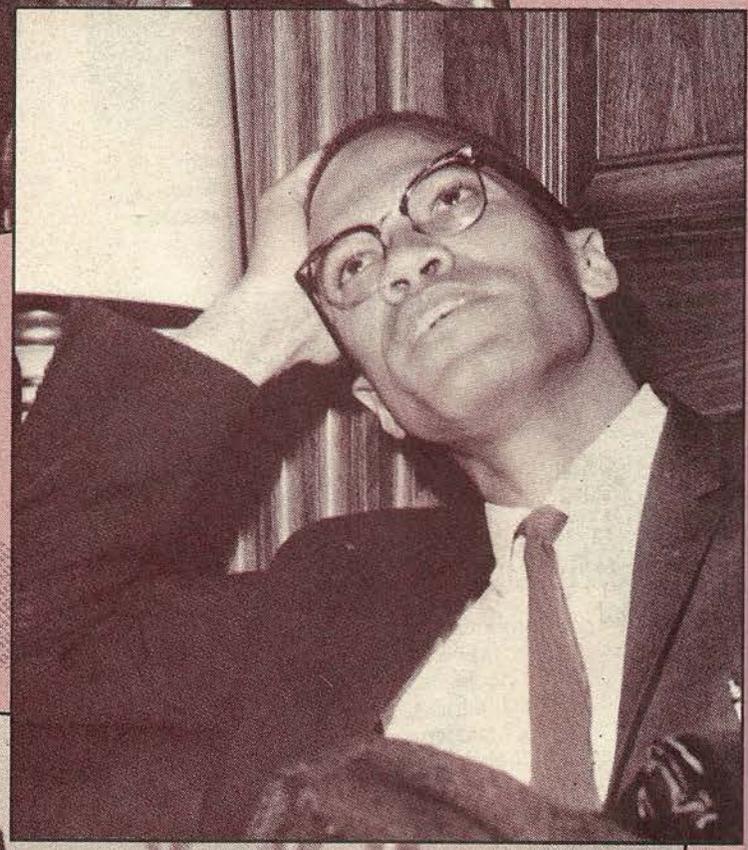
Malcolm X and Abdul Reahman Babu, formerly a Minister for External Affairs in the United Republic of Tanganyika. Malcolm had founded his own groups, the Organization of Afro-American Unity and the Muslim Mosque, Inc., and was on an African tour whose purpose was to establish personal contacts between Africans and Afro-Americans and open direct lines of contact between the two. Malcolm was steadfastly trying to make the plight of Black Americans an international issue by taking the U.S. government before the United Nations to charge the United States with violating their human rights.

LIFE & TIMES

Malcolm X talks to reporters at the Park-Sheraton Hotel in New York City, where he predicted that there would be more violence on the racial scene in 1964 than Americans had ever witnessed.

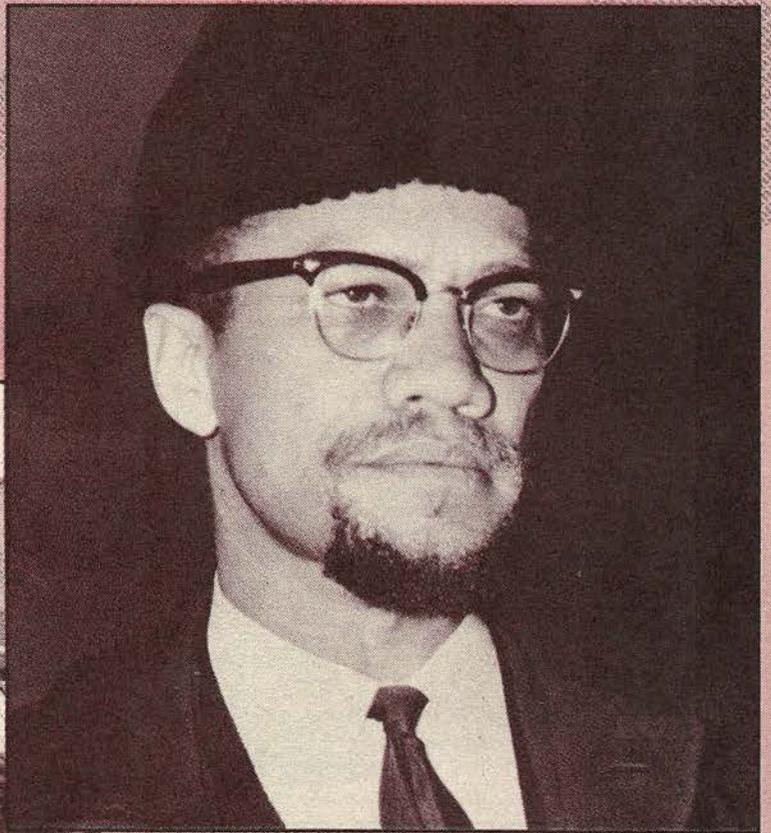


Malcolm X takes a breather at the Captitol in Washington in the spring of 1964.

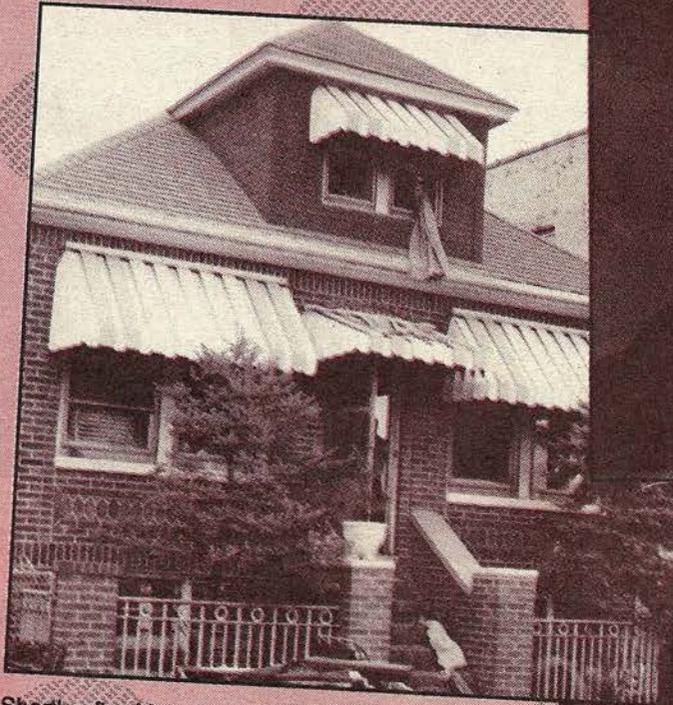


Malcolm X enjoys a light moment with Ahmed Shukairi (with hand extended), the head of the newly formed Palestinian organization, in Egypt. Shukairi was explaining the significance of each of the four colors on the Paestinian flag.

Now the National Chairman of the Organization for Afro-American Unity, Malcolm X looks exhausted in this photo which pictures him at London Airport upon his arrival from Paris after he had been refused entry into France. Malcolm was there to lecture the Federation of Black African Students on the subject of new attitudes, approaches and developments in the Afro-American struggle for freedom. He had previously been to Paris several times without difficulty.

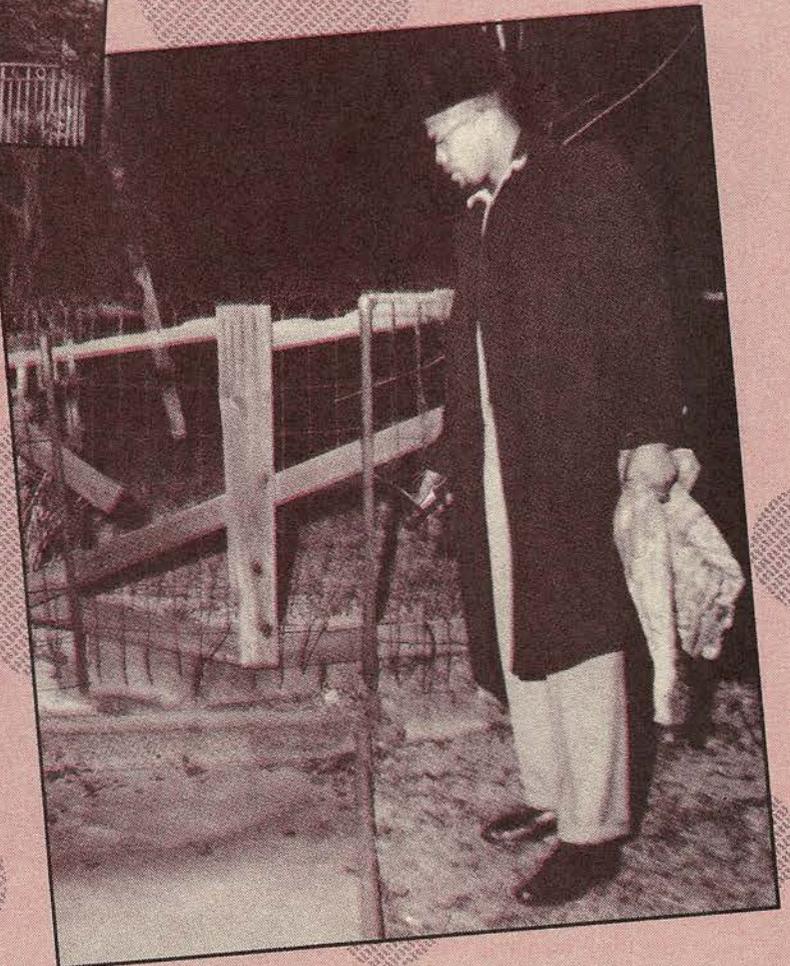


PHOTOS: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Shortly after Malcolm X returned from London, his home in Queens was firebombed. The report stated that two Molotov Cocktails had sparked a flash fire in the house which partially damaged the building. At the time, Malcolm was at home with his wife, Betty, and their four daughters, but no one was hurt.

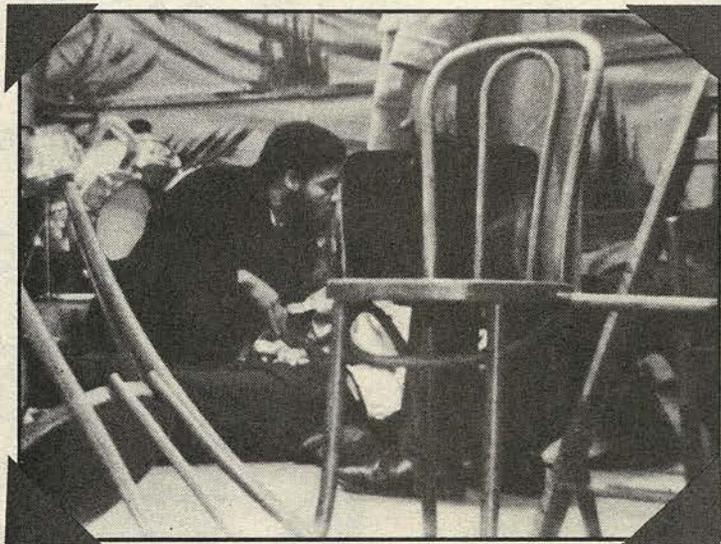
Malcolm X examines the damage outside his home. The firebomb attack took place early on Valentine's Day.



MALCOLM X THE FALLEN LEADER

The Assassination & Its Aftermath

PHOTOS: AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



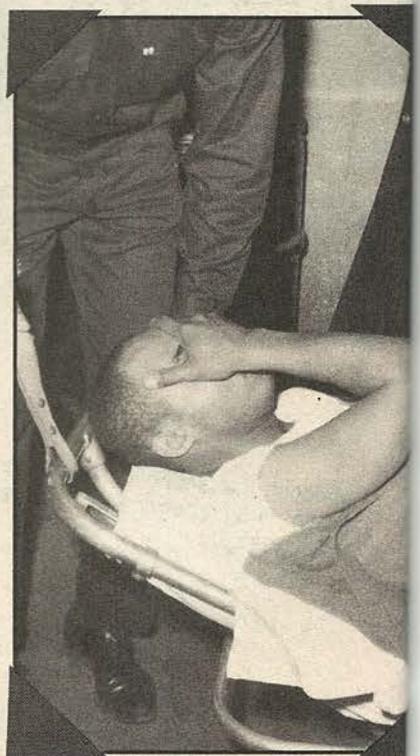
Malcolm X lies mortally wounded on the floor of the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem where he was felled by assassins' bullets while giving a speech there.



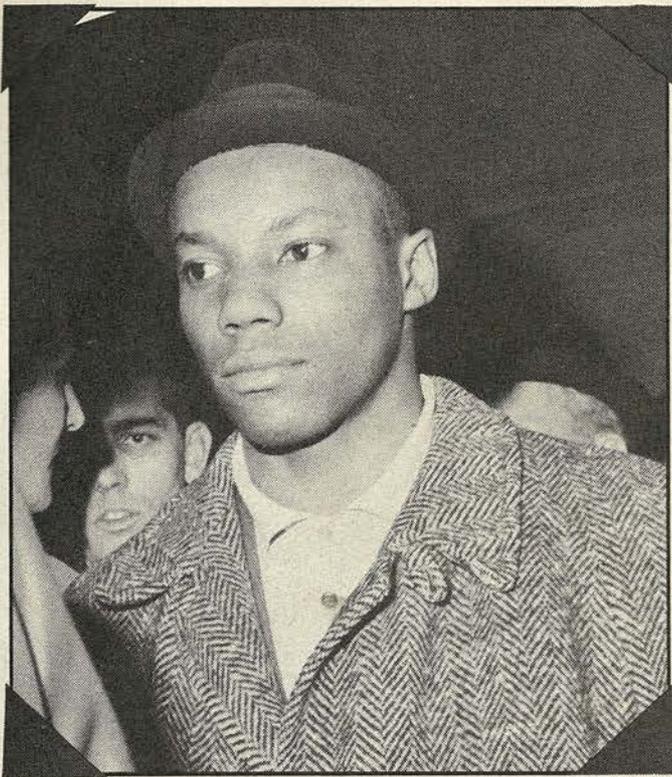
Outside the Ballroom, confusion reigned as police struggle with Thomas Hagan, a suspect in the shooting of Malcolm X. Hagan was also shot in the attack.



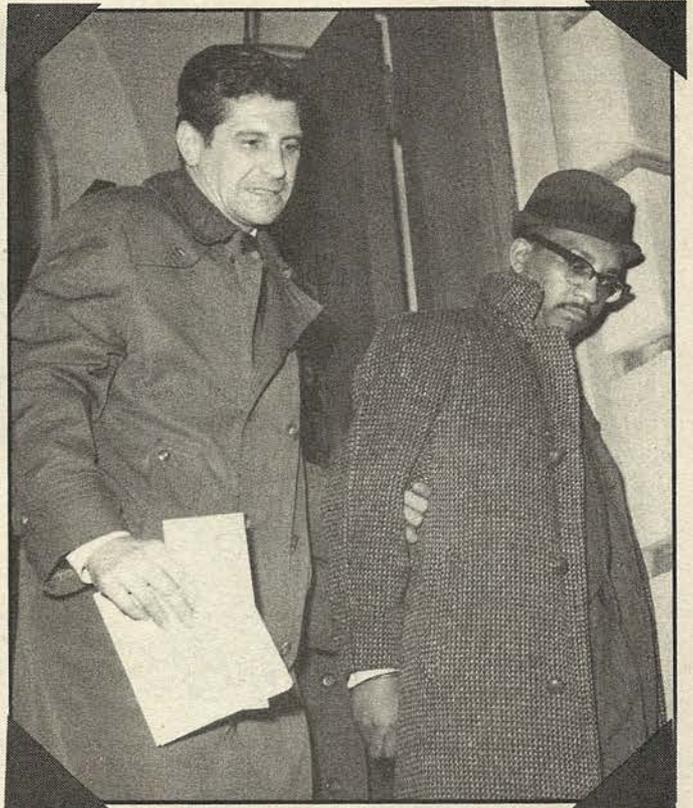
Malcolm X's wife, Betty Shabazz, holds the overcoat of her slain husband outside the Ballroom where he was shot. After the shooting, which occurred in a second-story ballroom, two Black men were seized as the gunmen.



Thomas Hagan, 22, is carried away in police custody from Jewish Memorial Hospital en route to Bellevue Hospital Manhattan. Police said Hagan was found carrying a pistol with four unused bullets.



Police lead Reuben Francis, 33, away from the police station after he was charged with felonious assault and illegal possession of a pistol. Police said Francis, a follower of Malcolm X, shot and wounded another man, Talmadge Hayer, at the rally where Malcolm was killed. Hayer was also charged with homicide in the death of Malcolm X.



Norman 3X Butler, another suspect in the assassination of Malcolm X, is shown at the police station after he was also charged with homicide in the shooting of the Black leader. Police described Butler as an "enforcer" in the Black Muslim organization.



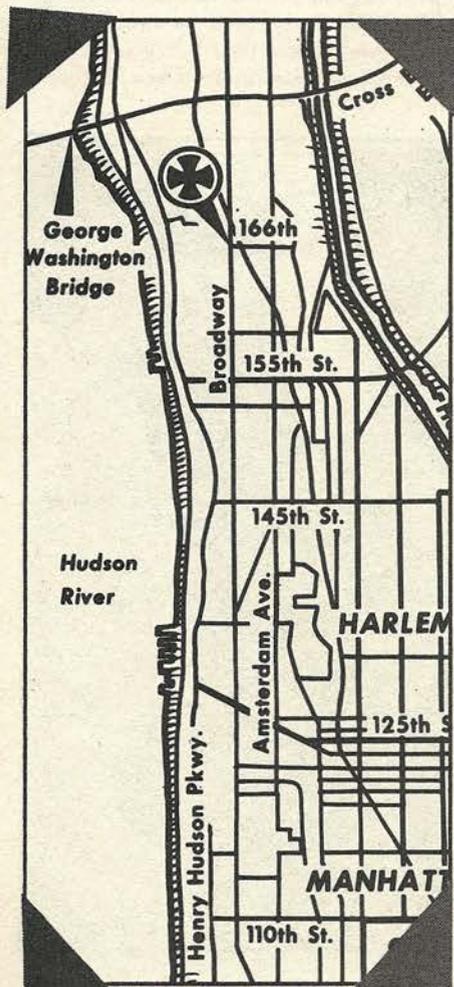
Well-known and respected actor Ossie Davis gave the eulogy for Malcolm X at the funeral services held in the Faith Temple Of God In Christ in Harlem on February 27, 1965. Davis called Malcolm a "brave and gallant young champion." Malcolm's widow, Betty, is seated second from the left in the pew facing the open casket.



Visitors to the funeral home housing the body of Malcolm X had to submit to intense searches by police as does this gentleman who came to pay his last respects to the fallen leader.



The funeral cortege of Malcolm X wound through Harlem led by police cars after orthodox Islamic rites were said for him at the Faith Temple Of God In Christ. The destination of the procession was a cemetery in nearby Westchester County.



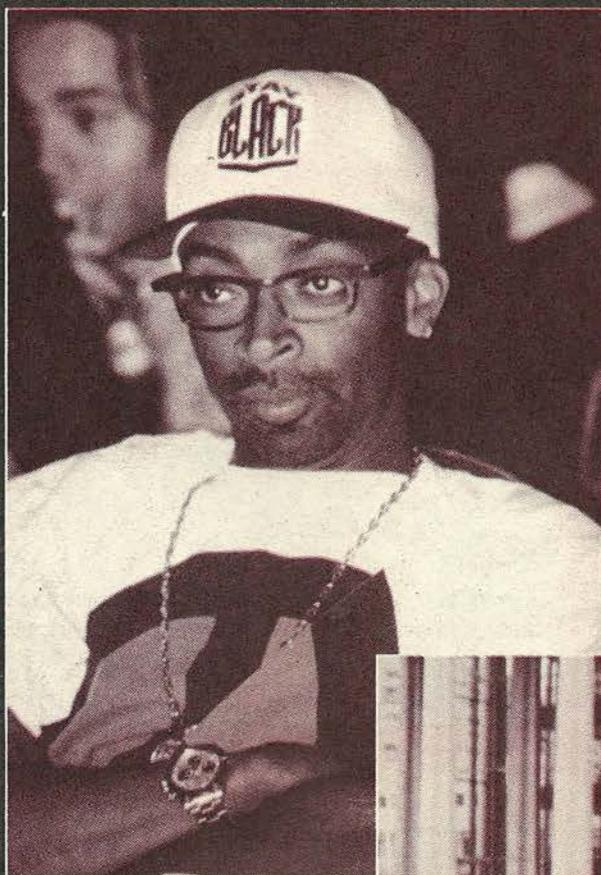
X marks the spot where Malcolm X was shot and killed in New York City.



Malcolm X in death.

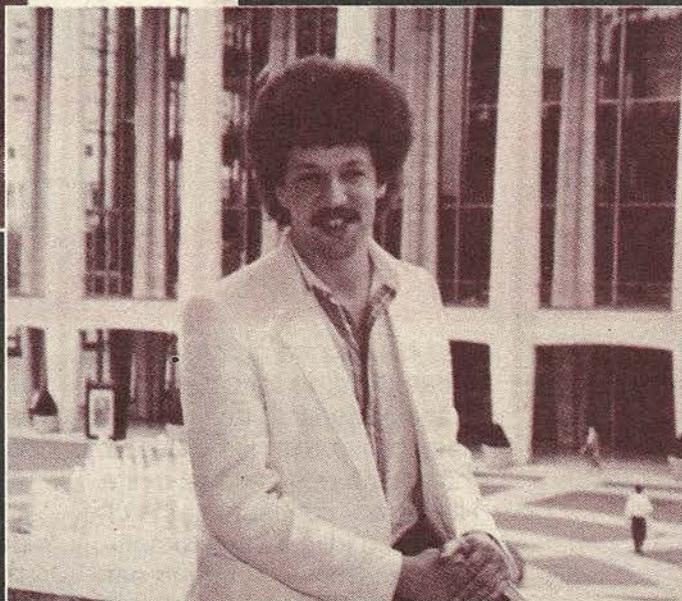


Malcolm X's grief-stricken widow, Betty Shabazz listens as Imam Alhaji Hessaans Jaaber chants an Islamic prayer beside the grave of Malcolm X. The slain leader is buried in Ferncliffe Cemetery in Hartsdale, a suburb in Westchester County.



Above: Spike Lee's production of *Malcolm X* is the first to hit the big screen, a Warner Bros. documentary of Malcolm's life preceding it.

Right: Composer Anthony Davis was the first to bring Malcolm X's story to the public.



many times, and acrimonious statements, which were highlighted in the press, punctuated the battles between Lee and the company.

Initially given a budget of \$20 million by Warner Bros. to make the movie, Lee eventually raised another \$8.5 million himself, from the sales of overseas rights, but wound up going over the budget by another \$5 million. The budget issue caused Lee and Warner Bros. to bump heads ferociously, once again, and the bond company insuring the studio against a cost overrun cut off funding for the project. Lee followed with house calls to friends, associates and acquaintances such as Oprah Winfrey, Magic Johnson, and Prince to raise additional monies to finish the movie, with Warner Bros. later reaching an agreement with the bond company resulting in the film being finished for \$34 million.

Like most of his movies to date, Lee's *Malcolm X* is expected to be a polemic masterpiece all but guaranteed to stir up the deepest emotions of the millions of people who will go to see the film. Played out against the very real climate of racism which has seemed to worsen in recent times and put groups at odds with one another, the ever worsening relationship between the Black community and the police, and the lack of strong Black leadership in America, *Malcolm X* is destined to bring a lot of people face to face with an ugly reality of life in America — racism is still alive and well and more needs to be done to root it out. And if for nothing else, this is one of the most important reasons why everyone in America needs to go see *Malcolm X*, by any means necessary!

The story of Malcolm X was first told not in film form, but in a Black opera titled *X* composed by Anthony Davis which premiered on September 28th in 1965 at the New York Opera.

At first, the idea of the three-act opera was not well received, but after receiving some influential support, the production was initiated and the composition, based on the life of Malcolm X, was presented to the public.

Years later, Malcolm X's life once again proved of interest to the artistic community when a stage production of Malcolm X's life was brought to New York theatergoers via the Negro Ensemble Company's play *When The Chickens Come Home To Roost*, the title a line said in a speech given by Malcolm X just after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

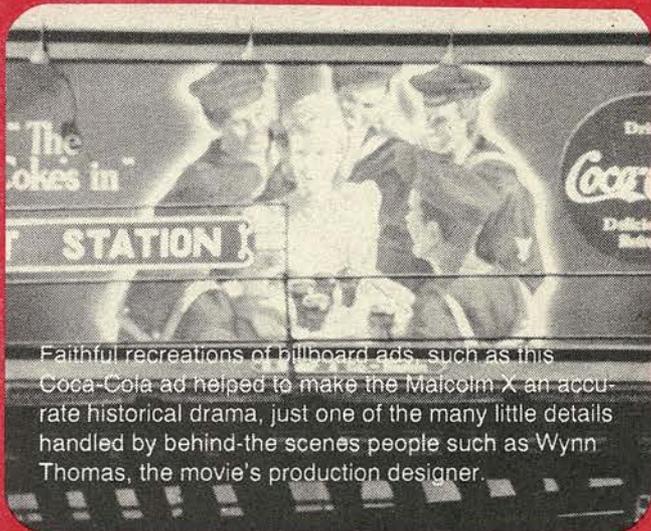
Ironically, the production starred actor Denzel Washington, whose portrayal of Malcolm won him critical acclaim, and set the stage, perhaps, for his repeat portrayal of the great Black leader a decade later in Spike Lee's film production of Malcolm X's life and times. Still later, another actor, Al Freeman, Jr., played the role of Malcolm in the television movie *Roots II*, a role which earned him an Emmy nomination. And he also appears in Lee's production of *Malcolm*, this time, however, playing the role of Elijah Muhammad.

Today, the movie is one of Hollywood's most highly anticipated screen dramas, made at a time when racial unrest is at an all time in America, and in the making when the Rodney King incident sparked an explosion of violence that left whole neighborhoods scarred and crippled, the effects of it rippling across the country like the tremor of a huge, devastating earthquake.

Fraught with its own myriad moments of earth-shattering legal drama, the making of *Malcolm X* brought Lee in direct confrontation with Warner Bros., the movie studio,

MALCOLM X: A WORK IN PROGRESS

The Story That Had To Be Told



Faithful recreations of billboard ads, such as this Coca-Cola ad helped to make the *Malcolm X* an accurate historical drama, just one of the many little details handled by behind-the-scenes people such as Wynn Thomas, the movie's production designer.



A neighborhood newsstand with the popular magazines and candy and cigarettes of the day was all a part of Malcolm's world.

The Producing Of The Epic Biopic: (Or As Spike Lee Said, The Making Of *Malcolm X* With 10 Million People Effin' With You!)

Like his chosen name, Malcolm X has become an enigma. Transformed into myth, he has been claimed in death even by those who rejected him in life. His legacy continues to be characterized less by a common vision than by a stubborn conviction by his followers that each person's particular view represents the real Malcolm. But the real Malcolm remains elusive.

At the time he lived, many people, Blacks included, regarded Malcolm X as a dangerous man, a man who was not afraid to stir up trouble, and shake things up—a man who could get people killed. Perceived as a leader who endorsed the use of violence to change the order

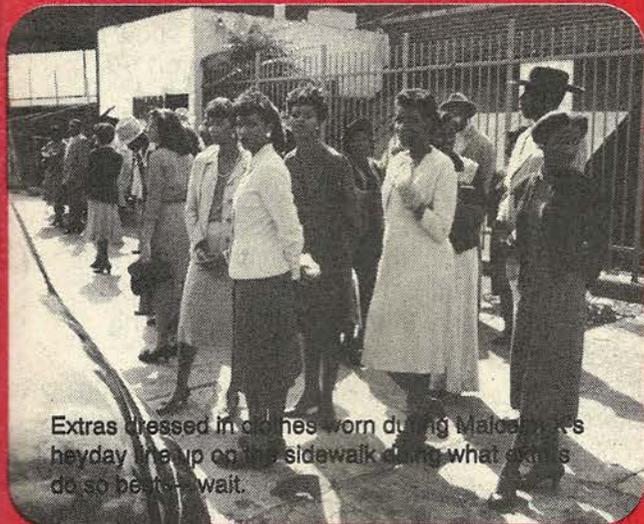
of the day, Malcolm X was largely misunderstood and misquoted by the mainstream press which flocked to cover his speeches, seizing on any phrase likely to create sensational copy, and in so doing provided a biased portrayal of a man whose words were many times reprinted out of context.

Malcolm X, even to those who knew him best, was a complex individual, a man whose philosophy could not be absolutely defined, a man who embraced changes when he felt it was necessary, a man who could never be categorized.

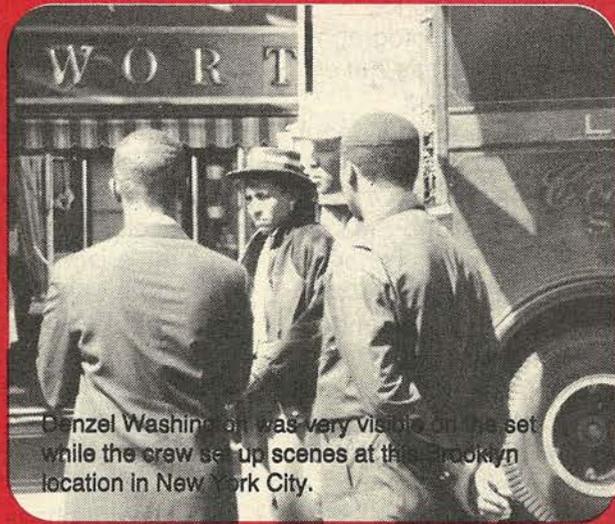
In making *Malcolm X*, Spike Lee has attempted to cinematically portray the epic and evol-

PHOTOS: GREGORY ST. CLAIR

MALCOLM X



Extras dressed in clothes worn during Malcolm X's heyday line up on the sidewalk during what extras do so best—wait.



Denzel Washington was very visible on the set while the crew set up scenes at this Brooklyn location in New York City.

ing life of one of America's most charismatic public figures. In doing so, Lee hopes that people will recognize the relevance of Malcolm X's philosophy in today's world.

Says Lee, "Here's a man who rose up from the dregs of society, spent time in jail, re-educated himself, and through spiritual enlightenment, rose to the top. This is an incredible story and I know that it will inspire people. He was three or four or five or six different people and that's what we want to show in this film."

Lee says he first read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in junior high school and was

deeply affected by it. In the movie, he tells onscreen the story of the many transformations of Malcolm X. "Malcolm X was a very complex man; I believe that his search for truth made him change over and over again, and it would be an injustice to his life to take any shortcuts in our film."

As the film's co-producer, Marvin Worth acquired the rights to Malcolm X's autobiography 26 years ago from Malcolm's widow, Betty Shabazz. Worth, who knew Malcom and whose documentary on the life of Malcolm was nominated for an Oscar in 1972, says he always knew this story

would be told.

"It's been a long journey getting to this point," says Worth. "It's rewarding to finally be making a film about his life."

"Malcolm X has always been largely misunderstood," continues Worth. "People view him in different ways depending on who they are, and everyone has his or own view of Malcolm X."

Obviously, one of the biggest challenges in making the movie would be how to present the different views of the multifaceted, charismatic Malcolm X. In addition, to tell the story of Malcolm X's life, it required representing America during the '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s and up to

THE MOVIE

the present. To meet this challenge, Spike Lee assembled a distinguished team of behind-the-scenes artists, many of who have collaborated with him on one or more of his previous works, including director of photography Ernest Dickerson (*Jungle Fever*, *Do The Right Thing* and Dickerson's own directorial debut *Juice*); editor Barry Alexander Brown (Madonna's *Truth Or Dare*, *Do The Right Thing* and *Salaam Bombay*); production designer Wynn Thomas (all five of Spike Lee's previous films); costume designer Ruth Carter (all of Lee's features and Kid 'N Play's *House Party*); and casting director Robi Reed (also all of Lee's films).

Production designer Wynn Thomas says the film was designed in three parts. The first covers Malcolm's early years; the second, his period of enlightenment in prison; and the third, his development as an activist. "We make the beginning phase of his

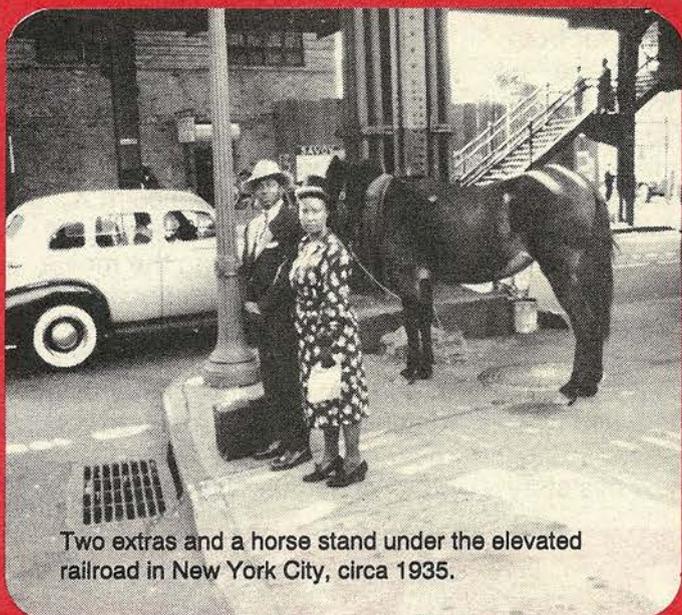
life very colorful and vibrant," Thomas explains. "We've filmed several nightclub scenes during the 1940s using lots of texture and colors."

For the second phase of the film, which covers Malcolm's incarceration, the production team filmed at Wilsey Street Jail in Newark, New Jersey. "What happens to Malcolm during that period is a rebirth. We are draining the color from his life and as a result the prison is treated monochromatically. We used a lot of grays, whites and blues." And in keeping with the concept of this second phase, director of photography, Ernest Dickerson, lit the prison scenes with cooling filters.

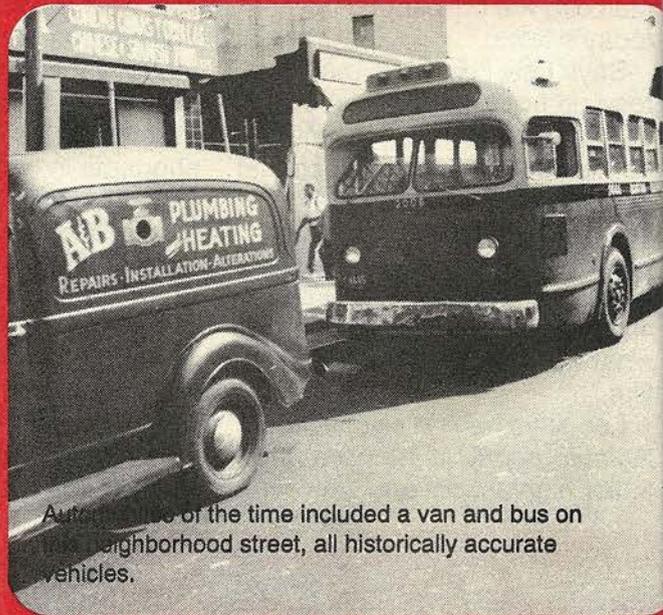
"In the third phase of the film," Thomas continues, "Malcolm has become a leader and he's much more serious, so we're using a lot of earth tones — browns, greens and natural tones — to reflect controlled realism."

Carter's wardrobe selection follows suit, as indicated by the clothing for Baines, the Muslim who introduces Malcolm to the Nation of Islam in prison. "When we first see Baines, he's dressed in warm brown tones to show how inviting he is," says Carter. "As Baines gets closer to the Honorable Elijah Muhammad and begins to plant the poison in his mind about Malcolm, I dressed him in grays. Finally, as Elijah Muhammad's health deteriorates and Baines becomes more powerful in the NOI, he is wearing dark, double-breasted suits."

Carter, who began working on the film in January, 1991, travelled throughout the country gathering information about Malcolm X. "I wanted to know him and understand who he was before we began the project," says Carter, who spent many hours in Harlem's historic Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.



Two extras and a horse stand under the elevated railroad in New York City, circa 1935.



Autos of the time included a van and bus on the neighborhood street, all historically accurate vehicles.

"The research has really paid off," Carter continues. "Denzel (Washington) and I have discussed every detail about Malcolm's clothes — his eyeglasses, his shoes, his ties — and what was happening in his life during particular periods. Photographs and research materials about Malcolm and his era helped us a lot."

Since much of the filming took place on the streets of New York City, the locations selected and the facades of buildings had to be transformed to reflect the city during the '40s, '50s and '60s. "This was an enormous job, bigger than it may appear on the screen," explains production designer, Thomas. "In addition to the research we did on everything, from the way street signs looked in the 1940s to what the interior of a school in the Midwest might have looked like in the 1930s, we had about 300 people working over a period of about six months

to construct the various buildings, sets and facades we needed."

Malcolm's early days in Nebraska were recaptured in upstate New York, where, Thomas recounts, several historically accurate buildings were built, including a farmhouse, which was later burned to the ground in the portrayal of an attack by the Ku Klux Klan.

The streets of Boston were described by Thomas as the most difficult to re-create. "We needed to show a large intersection, and since camera angles gave visual access to streets on all sides, we actually had to re-create a significant section of the city, complete with railroad tracks, houses, stores and everything else you'd be able to see."

In January, Lee and his film crew travelled to Egypt to re-create the scenes of Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca. Thomas, with the assistance of the Egyptian unit's associate producer,

Fernando Sulichin, found locations and materials to create the setting for Malcolm's religious pilgrimage to Mecca.

"There is actually a large film community in Cairo, and it was less difficult than you might assume to make a movie there. However, it did require about three months of negotiation and planning to complete 10 days of filming, so there were quite a few challenges to overcome."

Thomas asserts that he felt that accuracy was of prime importance in bringing the setting of Malcolm's life to the screen. "The environment of the story helps make it more real for the audience, and also helped the actors interpret their parts. I felt that it was important to be as faithful as possible to the truth of Malcolm's life and his world."

Production for the movie was concluded in Soweto, South Africa, where the ending of the film was photographed.



Spike looking over the scene. All good directors must have an eye for detail, especially when making period pieces such as Malcolm X.



A street scene reflects the work of about 300 people who worked tirelessly to construct the buildings, sets and facades needed to establish historical authenticity in locations used for Malcolm X.

SPIKE LEE

"I'M THE GUY"



PHOTO: ED ESPOSITO

Spike Lee has realized a personal goal with the making of the movie *Malcolm X*.

prominent Black sporting and entertainment personalities who came through with the needed cash to make Warner Bros. negotiate with the bonding company insuring the movie so Lee could bring in the budget at \$34 million.

Always controversial and outspoken, Lee's troubles with Warner Bros. were commented on by the director in the press with him describing the company's executives as money-grubbing philistines who were only interested in how much the money the film would net them at the box office.

Preceded by an abundance of publicity and promotion, *Malcolm X*'s arrival was heralded many months prior to its release by a marketing plan which pumped a flood of Malcolm X hats into the marketplace. A black hat with a white X became the hottest selling item at Spike Lee's store in Brooklyn as well as on street corners all over the nation as vendors hurriedly capitalized on the popularity of the caps and started ordering them from illegal manufacturers who had no license to make the hats.

Lee was rumored to be so enraged by the piracy that if he saw an unlicensed hat on someone's head, he would angrily snatch it off. (Of course, that's only a rumor!) Too huge a business to close down, however, bootleg hats continued to sell, in the end still promoting Lee's movie although profits from their sales were going into the hands of a variety of people.

As time passed, however, Lee's attention shifted to the promotion of the movie through agencies of the Black press. In an unprecedented campaign, Lee made himself and other movie principals accessible to the Black press for interviews so that the movie could benefit from any advance writeups it would receive.

The following is from an interview Lee had with the Black press about one month prior to the release of *Malcolm X*. The press members had been shown four trailer clips from the film the day before the interview session, a mini-screening also attended by Lee, and two of the movie's other principals, Angela Bassett (Betty Shabazz) and Al Freeman, Jr. (Elijah Muhammad).

Q: How long will the movie be?

LEE: Three hours and 15 minutes.

Q: What made you go ahead and allow us to look at the scenes that we saw, because I know that you'd stated that there'd been a lot of negative opinions and that kind of thing and that you wanted to correct whatever people were saying or at least educate people to the point where they shouldn't speak until they'd actually seen something for themselves. Now, was that the only reason? Because this is unprecedented, you mentioned —

LEE: No, we wanted to extend our hand to the Black press. You know, this is usually not done. We want to make them feel a part of the film. Make them feel that this is their film as much as *Time* or *Newsweek* or *Entertainment Weekly*, *Spin* or *Rolling Stone*, and just a special treat, show you some scenes of the film.

Q: Did you have any dialogue between yourself and the Nation of Islam about the movie?

"I'm the guy. I'm the guy," said Spike Lee to director Norman Jewison in a telephone conversation a few years ago. At the time, Lee was campaigning to make the film version of *Malcolm X* and was trying to convince Norman Jewison, who was all set to direct an adaptation of the book *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X* by playwright Charles Fuller.

Lee's dogged determination eventually caused Jewison to turn the project over to him, whereupon he promptly dumped Fuller's screenplay, and another version by well-known playwright David Mamet, and homed in on a version written by author James Baldwin and Arnold Perl in the late '60s.

"Theirs was the best," said Lee in an interview with *New York Magazine*, which ran a cover story on the film. "But Elijah Muhammad was still alive when they wrote the script, and they dodged the breakup between the Black Muslims and Malcolm, as well as the assassination. I put all that back in. Malcolm was always in search of truth. He was in that one percent able to repudiate their past life because of what was no longer true."

Something of a mission for Lee, the making of *Malcolm X* into a major screen presentation was a goal he had in mind from the beginning of his directing career. "I was in junior high school when I read *The Autobiography Of Malcolm X*," said Lee in the same *New York Magazine* interview, "and it changed my life. I had never been exposed to a Black man who spoke so frankly."

When word came out that Lee would be directing the film, he was castigated by a number of Black community leaders including the playwright/poet Amiri Baraka, who went so far as to do a film-by-film critique of all of Lee's work to prove how unfit he was to film the life of Malcolm X in addition to organizing a rally in Harlem to protest the making of the film. Baraka claimed Lee's film would distort Malcolm's life and ease the minds of middle-class "Negroes."

"Malcolm X's life is not a commercial property," said Baraka. "It can't be claimed by a petit bourgeois Negro who has \$40 million."

As it happened, Lee received a \$20 million budget from Warner Bros. studios to make the movie, but later had to raise several more millions still going over the budget set for the movie. After the movie company refused to allot any more funds to the project, Lee had to raise the money by soliciting funds from

LEE: Before the film began, I flew out to Chicago to meet with Minister Farrakhan to talk about the film, and he made it clear that he was not really concerned about how Malcolm was portrayed. It was really about how we were gonna portray the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.

Q: Did you find that somewhat bizarre that the movie is about Malcolm X and not Elijah Muhammad, even though he —

LEE: No, Elijah was in it, and they let me know how they felt about Elijah, and how they feel about certain portrayals of Elijah.

Q: Well, what did they say exactly?

LEE: (Pause) They just let me know. (Everyone laughs)

Q: This is your first biography, and obviously it took a lot of time and research to do this. What kind of impact did Malcolm X make on you when you were younger. Did you always admire him?

LEE: Well, all I'd heard about was Martin Luther King. I didn't read the autobiography until junior high school, and that's what made it have a profound effect on me then. I knew that I wanted to do this film, probably after *Do The Right Thing*.

Q: Was it because of the race thing, the injustices in the United States, or you just wanted — the injustices in the world, or you just wanted to educate people about Malcolm X by using this film as motivation?

LEE: I wanted the film to be done correctly. That is why I campaigned — beaugarded for the job, because Norman Jewison was hired to direct this movie.

Q: We read months back that you were having trouble as far as finances were concerned. You had to reach out to a host of entertainers and Black figures. How did that make you feel? Did you feel that that was just another obstacle standing in your way?

LEE: Well, there was no other resort. The bond company cut off funding of the film. Warner Bros. said because of the legalities, they could not give me any money until things got worked out between them and the bond company. And so Malcolm always talked about do for self. There's too many Black folks running around with money not to put that in action. I just picked up the phone and called people. Now, of course, it was still, for me, personally, still very hard phone calls to make. I don't like to be in a position where I'm practically begging Michael Jordan, Magic, Oprah, Bill Cosby, Prince and Tracy Chapman — I always leave out somebody and get in trouble. But those were not easy phone calls to make.

Q: But they responded to you.

LEE: Yeah. But there were a lot more people we asked too, but those were the ones who came through and wrote some checks.

Q: How do you feel about — and I don't include the film in this particular question, how do you feel about what I call the marketing of Malcolm X, the commercialization of his image, the X on the hats, etc., etc.

LEE: The hats and the T-shirts don't bother me. Malcolm X potato chops bother me. Kenny Gamble is behind that.

Q: Does the fact that the hat and the T-shirts become important if it's done properly as it pertains to the film. It all brings people to it.

LEE: Yes, it's marketing. A T-shirt, that's a walking billboard.

Q: When you set out to do this film, did you have any idea that you would come up against some of the controversy that you did, the threats?

LEE: We knew we would go through the fire on this one.

Q: Was it worse or a little less than you thought?

LEE: It's about what we expected.

Q: Can you speak about the research, since you went to Mecca

LEE: I didn't go to Mecca.

Q: Okay, well the film included sections where it involved people going there. Can you speak of the significance of that

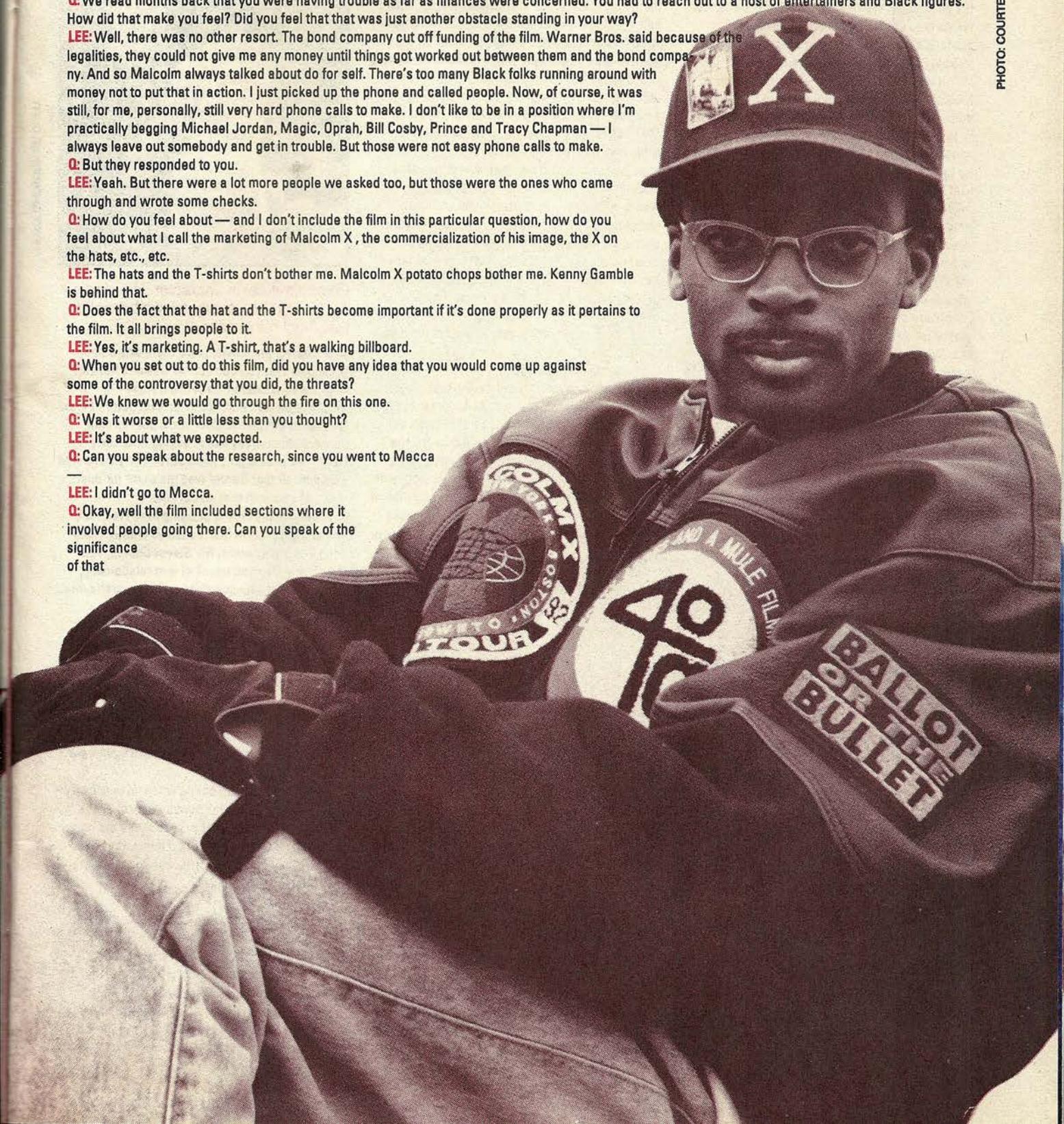


PHOTO: COURTESY WARNER BROS.

research and bringing in information such as that.

LEE: Well, we felt it was important that we had to spend the time to show the transformation of Malcolm. We can't have him saying, 'White people, blue-eyed, grafted devils,' for two hours and then spend two minutes in Mecca. We had to spend the time. Therefore, we wanted to shoot there so we got the permission of the Saudi government, and they allowed us — we had to hire an Islamic crew, who let us bring our cameras into the holy city of Mecca, and we shot, two consecutive years we shot the sacred rite of Hajj, the pilgrimage. We used the wide shots and then we went to Egypt and we shot Denzel so it's intercut, seamlessly, you can't tell what's what.

Q: How difficult was it to get permission?

LEE: It was difficult, but in the Islamic world, Malcolm is a saint. He's a martyr, so they welcomed us.

Q: How would you rate the making of this movie in comparison to all the movies that you've done up to this point in your career?

LEE: I mean, everything led up to this. This is the culmination of the previous — all my work of the previous five films.

Q: What's some more projects that you would like to work on?

LEE: I really don't know now. I'm just trying to finish this one.

Q: Is there any message in particular that you want Afro-American youth to get from this?

LEE: Well, I think that really, they really have to come out in this theater and look how Malcolm viewed education. I mean, there's too many Black kids out there who ridicule other Black kids because they get As or they speak correct English, and that type of backwards, ignorant thinking has to be stopped. Because, I mean, something is wrong when our values are so topsy-turvy that ignorance is championed over intelligence. And when you have kids who aren't strong, they're gonna bend to peer pressure and

will fail classes, get Ds on purpose so they can be down, so that they can be Black, and if you aren't strong enough that's what you'll do. That has to be stopped. Number one, that has to be stopped.

Q: How did you decide what scenes you would make available for us to look at?

LEE: Well, I knew that Angela Bassett was gonna be here. I knew that Al Freeman, Jr. was gonna be here so I chose — I went through their scenes to see which ones would be the best choice for last night. We wanted to give you something of Malcolm in the prison. We wanted to show you Malcolm as we all know him, as an orator, and then have a flashback to show something, what happened in his early life that led him to become what he became. The flashbacks, I feel which I think is one of the major points in the book. That scene when Mr. Ostrowski (his English teacher) tells him that the law profession is not for niggas, why don't you be a carpenter. Up to that point, Malcolm was the class president, straight As. After that, he didn't care about school anymore, after his teacher told him that. And think of the millions of Black folks that has happened to, where you're striving. Your teachers tell you, look, forget about college. Your guidance counselors, college counselors. We're steered in other directions. You don't want to be a ballerina. You don't want to do this. You don't want to do that. You don't want to be a brain surgeon, whatever.

Q: Did anyone ever try to talk you out of what you wanted to do?

LEE: (Laughs) All the time.

Q: I mean, I know you're still having that problem, but can you remember any specific instances in high school or junior high school that stood out.

LEE: Oh, you mean that? I remember in college people used to think I was crazy wanting to pursue a career as a filmmaker. Or we're trying to do *She's Gotta Have It*, and we're scrounging around trying to get our nickels together. They thought we were crazy about that. It would never happen.



Lee on the set in character. His signature is that he usually allows himself a role in all his movies.

Q: In casting the movie, were there any other principals that you considered besides Denzel?

LEE: It was academic because Denzel Washington was part of this project before I was. He was hired then Warner Bros. got Norman Jewison. Everybody keeps saying how Larry Fishburne should play Malcolm X. Larry Fishburne said himself that Denzel was the actor for this role. Let's squash that all the way.

Q: What's really nice is bringing in Al Freeman, and showing him in film 'cause so many people don't know his career, *My Sweet Charlie*, *The Dutchman*. Can you speak of that relationship, what working with somebody who's a craftsman is like?

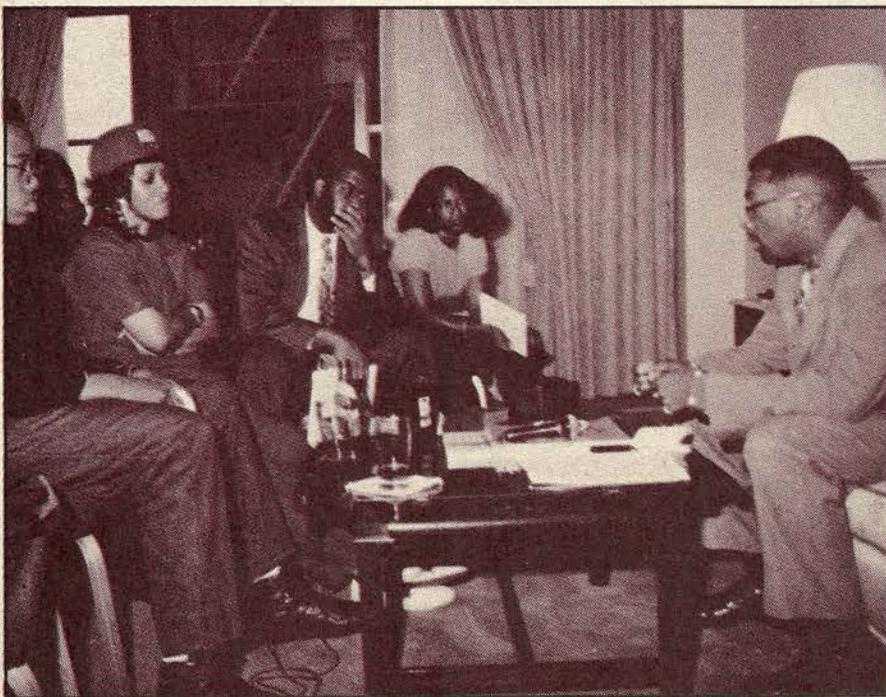
LEE: It was an honor. We gave him some tapes, audiotapes of Mr. Muhammad. We had some documentary footage. That's all we needed. I mean, we have actors like that, I can go to the Knick game (Laughs), come back, and you know, they're professionals. They're gonna come through.

Q: At this point in your career, do you even care about the Oscar?

LEE: (Pause) Well, I'm caring less and less every year. (Pause) They can't bypass Denzel, that's my point. It'd be too much of a — so that's the only thing. I'm sure of Denzel. But, I mean, they like him. He has one already. (Pause) So you all are with the teen magazines?

CHORUS: Yes.

LEE: They gotta read the book. I mean, it takes more than just wearing an X hat, an X T-shirt, and knowing some samples that were in some rap records. 'Too Black, too strong.' Awright, that's all I need to know about Malcolm X. 'By any means necessary'. That's all I need to know. It's not! They need to read the book!

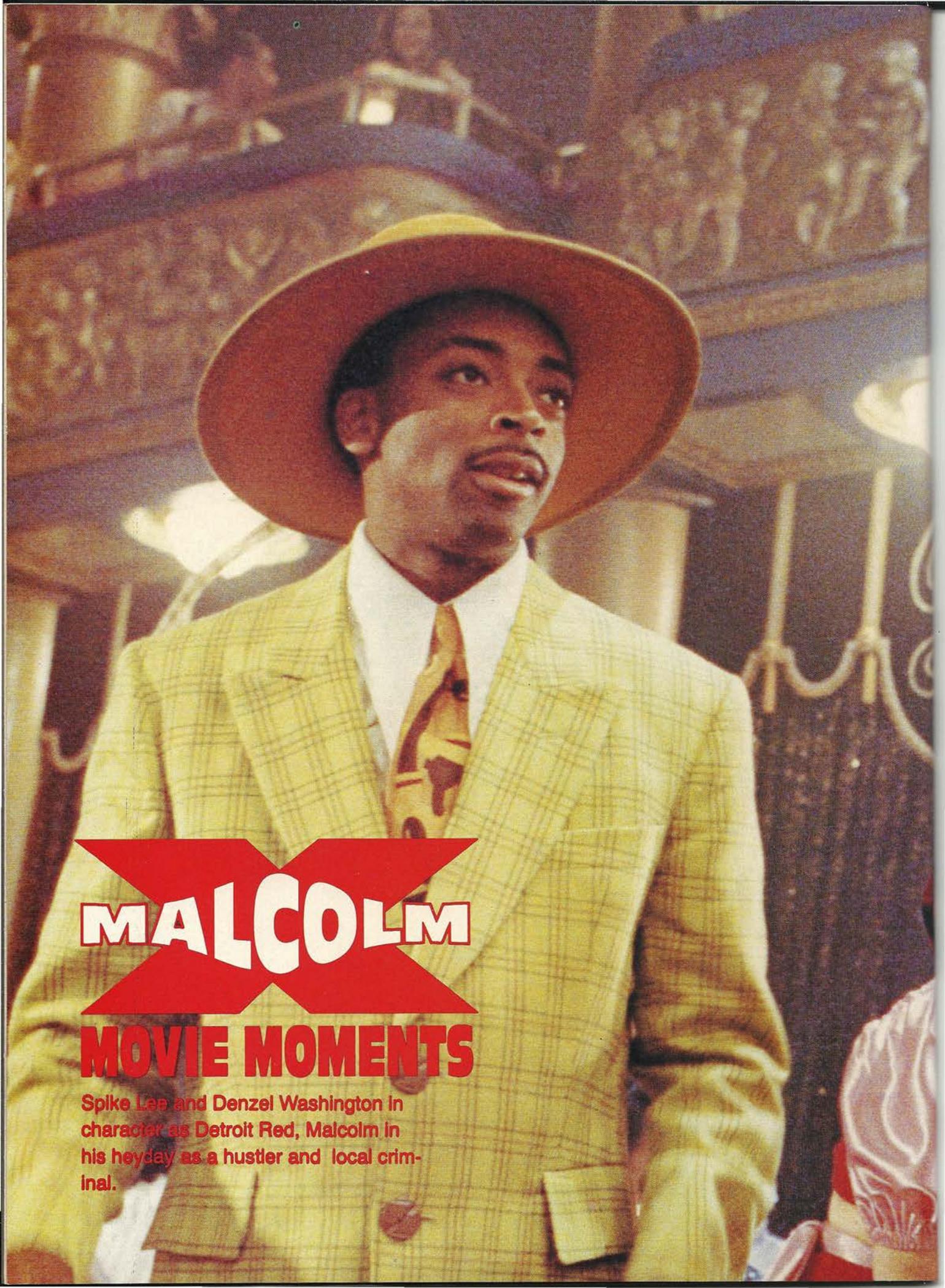


Spike discusses the movie with members of the Black press.

SPIKE LEE

PHOTO: DAVID LEE/COURTESY WARNER BROS.





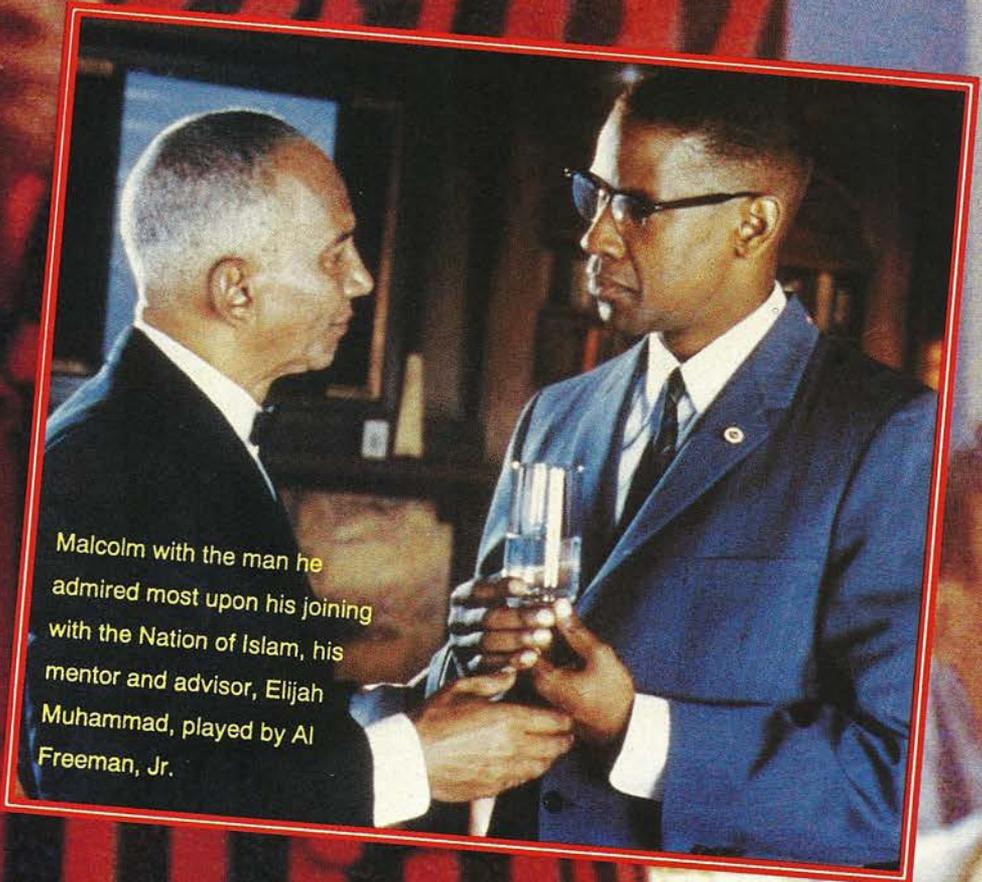
MALCOLM

MOVIE MOMENTS

Spike Lee and Denzel Washington in character as Detroit Red, Malcolm in his heyday as a hustler and local criminal.



PHOTO: DAVID LEE/COURTESY WARNER BROS.



Malcolm with the man he admired most upon his joining with the Nation of Islam, his mentor and advisor, Elijah Muhammad, played by Al Freeman, Jr.

PHOTO: DAVID LEE/COURTESY WARNER BROS.



MALCOLM

MOVIE MOMENTS

The marriage of Malcolm X to Betty Shabazz later produced only female children. Malcolm had no sons.



MALCOLM X

MOVIE MOMENTS

Malcolm emerges as a popular, charismatic leader in the Black community, here, making one of numerous public speeches, near the Apollo Theater.

PHOTO: DAVID LEE/COURTESY WARNER BROS.

The MALCOLM X

PHOTO: ED ESPOSITO



ANGELA BASSETT

Actress Angela Bassett appears as Betty Shabazz, Malcolm X's wife, in the movie Malcolm X, but got her first big break in the movie Boyz 'N The Hood, directed by John Singleton. Bassett also has television credits to her name and plays Katherine Jackson in this fall's ABC-TV miniseries The Jackson: An American Dream, but undoubtedly the role of Betty Shabazz is her most high-profile role, one which is guaranteed to bring her abundant exposure as it is one of the screen's most coveted roles of the year.

Q: How many people auditioned for that role?

ANGELA: I have not a clue. I never

saw any other person, any other sister, auditioning for Betty, you know.

The second time that I went in to auditions... I was put on videotape the first time, and they sent the tape to New York, to Spike, and he was gonna come out to L.A., thank goodness, and audition people, but he wanted a preliminary tape to get an idea of people he might want to see when he got there. And they called me and said, 'Okay, he wants to see you,' okay, 'so come in.' I went in the first day. I was put on videotape again, but auditioning with Denzel Washington, auditioning with the actor, which, of course, is an incredible experience, you know. I mean, there's a very important relationship that's going on between the two of them [Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz], so, I mean, I was thankful that he was there because he really had this energy, and his work, and just his work that he's done as you'll be able to see in the film, and then really play off of him. And we, oooh, forgot about the camera, we were off and all over the room, at one point. And the second [time] I came in the next day to do the five scenes again. And they said, 'Angela, put on a little bit more makeup,' 'cause, you know, I thought, I'm a Muslim, and, you know, would not wear lipstick and eyelashes, and you know, very long [dresses], very subdued and very, very lowkey, and [they said] 'Wear makeup.' [And I said], 'Well, 'come on, I have on a little bit now.' They said, 'Wear more.' I said, 'Okay.' So I put on red lipstick, whatever, and we do about two scenes, Denzel and I, then he jumps up and he runs off, and I go, hmmm, oh well, I guess he'll be back when he's ready. He came on back and he had some tissue and he wiped the lipstick off. And I just, you know, leaned into him and let him do it, and it didn't throw me because we'd been so, I guess even then, just so confident and assured in the work, in each other, you know, that the other is gonna care about you and

your work and give you space, and the interplay was just really wonderful and open. It was like, okay, and I remember telling people, and they said, 'Oh, that would have thrown me! I would have been so nervous. What! What was he doing!' I was like, no, it was perfect. He knows how Betty is supposed to look, and it was just a bit too much, you know, for Malcolm.

Q: What experiences did you draw upon to play this role?

ANGELA: Just growing up with my Mom. It was Betty at that time and four girls, you know, four daughters. It was just the girls a lot of the time because he [Malcolm] was away so often, and I, Angela, grew up with just my Mom and my sister and two older half sisters. I'm very close to my father's sister, various relations in my life...so, you know, just the relationship of women, strong Black women, just supportive of each other. I think I draw upon just friends that I've had, this passion and love that I have for people. You know, education. She's very educated. She graduated from Tuskegee Institute. She was in college here. That opportunity just wasn't a given in that day, you know, time and money and opportunity, you know, or whatever. Today, you're not going to college, that's odd! In that time, you're going to college? Oooh, that's extraordinary, wonderful, and I, Angela, had the opportunity because someone cared and just said, 'You know what? You could go to Yale University.' I could? It never even crossed my mind. Really? Well, I'm gonna apply. I got in? Oh, oh! But I didn't know. But I had people in my life who believed in my potential, who believed in me, and I thank God for that, you know, that they were able to guide me, to influence me, because what do you know sometimes when you're growing up? You know, you're reaching and trying to learn more day by day, and have just positive influences in your life. It's incredibly important, and I think that's what Malcolm is. You know,

even though you don't know him, I was telling someone, I believe that he cared about me. He never knew me, but he cared about me, about the woman that I would grow up to be. He wanted me to have dignity and integrity, be graceful, always be a lady, be proud of yourself, develop your self-esteem. Don't let someone tell you you can't do such and such a thing because you're a woman and you're a Black woman, and, you know, try to be an actress, you know how hard that is; you gotta starve! Follow your dream. It's too much time to follow everybody else's dream, but follow yours initially. Follow yours first.

Q: Did you find anything about the role difficult?

ANGELA: Not really. It just fit. Sometimes it's difficult, and you say, ooh, I've gone so far outside myself. Oooh, I've got to put on this physicality — she had polio, or this limp. For instance, Al Freeman, because Elijah Muhammad really had a very sickly thing that was going on with this coughing (Coughs), this physical ailment that he as a man had. People would hear about Elijah Muhammad, but then they'd go and hear him speak and be disappointed because his voice wasn't strong and commanding. He wasn't as charismatic as Malcolm X was, so sometimes they were disappointed. So I didn't have those kinds of things to put on Betty. I had to remember never to cross my legs because Muslim women didn't do that. Sit up straight, to never raise my voice above my husband's, things like that that weren't too difficult, but very interesting. I was speaking with Muslim sisters and just gaining knowledge about their involvement with their families, with their men and with their children.

Q: So referring back to the research, knowing Islam, knowing Malcolm's life, and if so what kind of research did you do?

ANGELA: I spent some time with a couple of Muslim sisters, but the brothers had Fruit Of Islam training, security training; they were really doing a lot of physical stuff. But I just spent hours talking to some of the sisters, you know, just asking them about food preparation, things that I wouldn't do in the film, but I wanted to know because it informed... May I have the Koran there? I know I'm in this scene seething, but may I have it right here on this bed table. I'm pregnant. They told me, sisters spend a lot of time reading the Koran when they're pregnant —

Q: Did you read the Koran?

ANGELA: (Laughs) That's a big book to get through. I looked through it,

but I can't say I read it cover to cover. I read his autobiography though. I read it cover to cover twice. I read some other things from the dead level, which was an experience. The brother, he knew Malcolm and he was kind of in that life, you know, really rambunctious and he came to the Nation Of Islam and how it changed his life. It was written in the '60s so you just get — which felt different than now. They had a lot of sayings. You know, give me five. And you give him one and you say, I owe you four (Laughs). You know things like that, that they would say during the day, so it was just really informative and like I say informs the work and the process.

Q: When did you as a person first become aware of Malcolm X, and what did you think of him?

ANGELA: I was in college and picked up — can't remember, but I picked up his autobiography, and I just started reading it cover to cover, and it was the first thing that I saw in the morning and the last thing that I saw at night. I was in drama school, at the Yale Drama School at the time and was fascinated by this man who was bigger than life, and was just so honest, and had so much integrity, told you the things about his life that weren't too complimentary. But he also changed. And he told you where he came from so you could appreciate the journey he made and where he ended up.

Q: I read in the biography that Betty Shabazz was a consultant to the film. Is it difficult to portray someone who is still alive today? And did she have any input or any influence on the role directly?

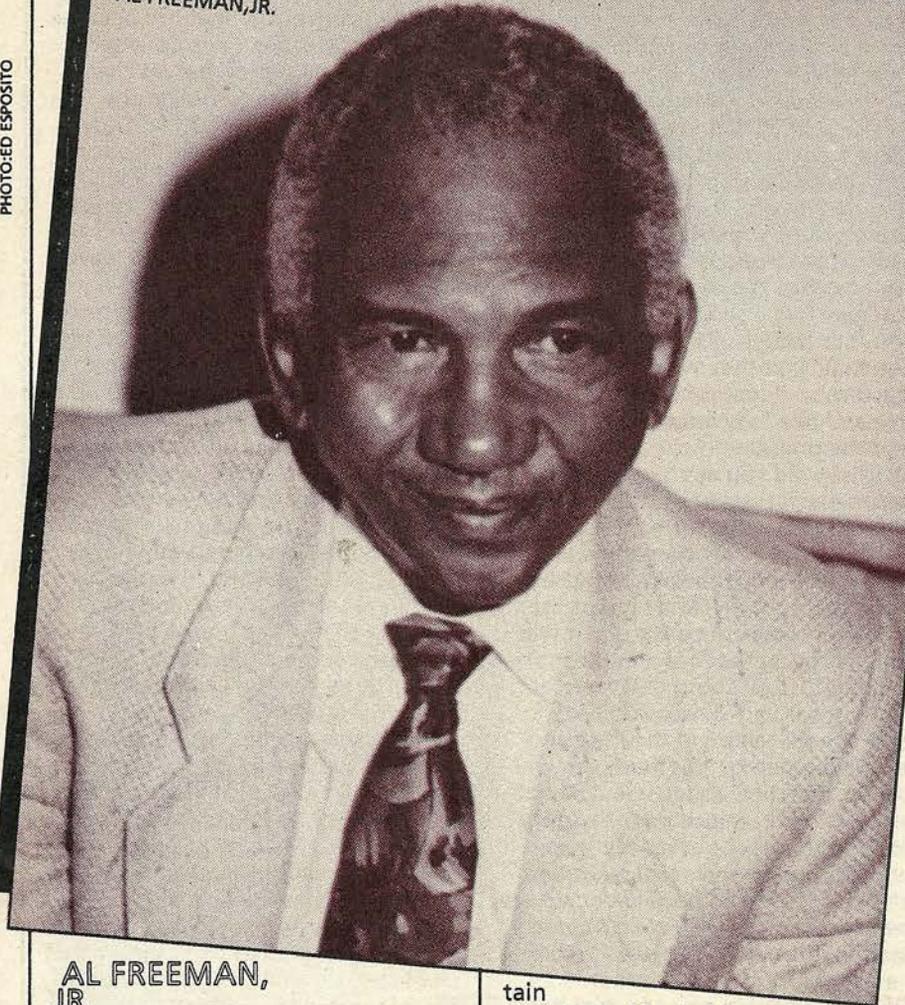
ANGELA: Your first question. Not really difficult; it's a challenge in that you can't go so far off the mark, you know. You want to make things dramatic or make them interesting, but you can't go so far off the mark that it's not true to that person, but a lot of the research has been done. You know, let me see, what do I want to do here. Do I want to make him stutter? How do I want to dress them? Because she dressed a certain way. She carried herself in a certain manner. She spoke in a certain way. She wore her hair in a certain way, you know, beautiful, thick black hair. She loved to show it. She didn't like wearing those headdresses, so I couldn't go in there with braids, certainly, so a lot of the work's been done already. And I've had a chance to play a lot of historical people... Katherine Jackson now, so I've had the opportunity to play real-life people. I don't know, maybe it's something. I must bring something to it. Maybe I come across

as a real person, you know, mother or something. But I didn't get a chance to actually meet Dr. Shabazz because she was at Medgar Evers College.

Q: In the past, in biographies that were done on Black women, the information was altered, like *Lady Sings The Blues*, the movie was completely different from the book; *The Josephine Baker Story*, some things were different, but I guess with Spike Lee and this project, he didn't leave any stone unturned —

ANGELA: You know what, I think it's funny, this project is bigger than life because there's just so many facets to Malcolm, when he was growing up as a child, as a pimp, as a hustler, you know, a Minister in the Nation Of Islam, being ostracized from that group. He came and he went to Mecca and just opening up and seeing all men as brothers, you know, the possibility of living in harmony. There are certain things, and it's amazing that we're gonna be three hours and some odd minutes, you know, three hours and fifteen minutes, or thereabout, when your average movie is maybe two hours, sometimes, you know, so it's really jam-packed with a lot of info. A lot of characters, of course, have to be a combination. Malcolm's brother actually told him about the Nation Of Islam when he was in prison, but in this he meets Brother Baines in prison and the information comes from that character. Certain things, we won't be able to put in. He goes to Mecca, and it was Betty saving those pennies because he wouldn't take money because so many people believe in these figures that are before them, and they give and they support financially and emotionally and spiritually or whatever, and sometimes they're disappointed and he knew that. So he never —, you know, don't put the house in my name. Don't put the car in my name. Betty would put money aside along with his sister, Ellan, and that's how he got to Mecca. That's how he was able to get to Mecca, those two women..Now, you won't see that in the movie, but that informed my character, 'cause she was looking out for him. She cared, cared about the man and not just the figure up on the podium. So certain things we won't be able to see just in the interest of time, but what I hope will happen, what you do get to see is just gonna be just so provoking and so wonderful that people are gonna go, if they haven't read the book, they're gonna read it. If they have it, they're gonna reread it. I don't know, maybe check out some of these libraries and just come up with some of the material that's out there.

AL FREEMAN, JR.



AL FREEMAN, JR.

A veteran of stage, screen and television, Al Freeman, Jr. was nominated for an Emmy in 1979 for his portrayal of Malcolm X in *Roots II*. He was born in San Antonio, Texas and is currently the chairman and artistic director of Howard University's theater arts department.

Q: Do you find that it's more difficult or easier to portray someone who has lived or a fictitious character?

AL: Certainly Elijah had a lot of people who were very connected to him and who remember him. Certainly everybody's memory is different, you know, and that gave me some concern in the beginning. We had to be as accurate in giving an essence, certainly not to imitate him, anyway, as best we could. His voice, for instance, was very different than mine and was something that I really had to work on. He had an odd way of putting words together and paused in a lot of peculiar places, and coming from Georgia, had an accent that was almost sometimes West Indian, cer-

tain sounds, and having been a Baptist preacher, he had some of that in him too. It's a challenge to do. I've been, in my so-called career have done a few people. Like I played Bobby Seale once in the Chicago Seven trial. I did Malcolm in *Roots II*. I think I even played Paul Robeson once at the Yale Rep many years ago. They're challenging, but I think the primary goal is to find the humanity in all those people, the life force that they have that drives them, that fuels them. Look for the humanness that's in there. It then becomes a person, a person that breathes, a person that thinks, a person that has emotions. So that's kind of how I try to portray them. You know, in this electronic age, where people are recorded, certainly they were, extensively, so that there're here. When you listen to a tape or watch a video, they're there, and you've got that now where it's very accessible to us, and that's very useful in something like this. Of course, as I've been saying, Denzel and I were playing scenes, two people behind the closed door, and the two people who were there dead, so the task is to try to put together, in

some kind of believable way, what they were actually saying to each other. We knew, kind of from the public record, what went before and then there was a change after this particular conversation so we had to try to use our imagination and craft the words and their relationship to each other in that manner. We do know, of course, that Malcolm and Elijah were very very close — very close, father-son, blood kind of thing. They had real feelings for each other. That's what Denzel and I were trying to capture, and I must say, he made it easy for me because he's an extraordinary actor and person, so we played off each other and some of it seemed to work.

Q: You were a contemporary of Malcolm X. When did you become aware of him?

AL: Publicly, at the same time that everybody else did when Mike Wallace did that interview alerting, I think, the White world to something that was brewing that they didn't know about, and that it was gaining momentum and all that sort of stuff. Of course, it was at the time of the Civil Rights Movement, and the non-violent marches and Martin Luther King, and all that stuff where these people and their tactics were really being horrendously attacked and murdered and maimed, and for that reason, I did not see myself as a sacrificial lamb here — if somebody's gonna throw a brick at me, I'm gonna have to do something about it. He could kill me, so I would not be suitable for that kind of movement. But certainly it stirred a lot of passion in my heart when I used to watch those things on television and all that, and I went to a rally...up on 125th and 7th Avenue, to protest the harsh treatment of those non-violent marchers, and send a message, I think, to the government to protect its citizens, which I suppose was the overriding theme of that. Along with all the proponents of the non-violence method, Malcolm was scheduled to speak, and he wasn't on the platform at the beginning of it. I remember seeing Lorraine Hansberry there [playwright and author of *A Raisin' In The Sun*]. It was the last time I really saw her healthy. She died not too long after. Anyway, they made the proper speeches, the non-violent people, we're gonna do this and do that, blah, blah, and then Malcolm came and mounted the platform and he said, 'If a dog attacks you, whether it's a four-legged dog or a two-legged dog, you kill that dog', and he was really saying, let us not take this stuff. Let's be men. Let's defend ourselves. We don't need the

government. We can do it. That was the message I wanted to hear, and from then on, it became something that I listened to...I got involved in a direct way with Malcolm. I certainly always wanted to hear what he had to say. I hope the film captures that because that's really the force that he was. I mean, he had a way of articulating the issues that had something to do with our own defining definitions of ourselves that made a lot of sense. And, I guess along with other people, when the split happened, and he became, he went to Mecca, and I wasn't quite sure what his direction was, where he was going, but it was clear when they would not allow him to enter France. He landed and they wouldn't let him out of the airport. He was beginning to have a global sort of influence, and it has been said that that's the reason he was silenced. Certainly the events in the Middle East might lend some credence to some of that possibility, however, I don't know, I don't subscribe to the conspiracy theory and all that, but it gives you pause.

Q: What kind of influence do you think this movie will have on the youth of today?

AL: Well, of course, you don't have any way of knowing that, but I would think, from what I saw last night in the trailers, and we all have to see the whole thing, how the ideas all fit together, and if they are, in fact, clear and have clearly captured the essence of the force that all those figures had, as well the movement at that time, then it can't help but have some kind of an influence that, I think, young people will respond to, and certainly I think it may need to be interpreted for our times, because these are different times. There are a lot of things confronting us now — AIDS, for instance, was not around in those days, you know, which affects the way we live these days, and there are some of the basic tenets of self-help, unity, building your own house, taking care of your own people are still valid ideas, and I think those will be communicated. I'm encouraged by what I saw last night, and I think young people will get that, and they'll know why they're wearing those T-shirts with the 'X' on them. I'm hopeful that that'll happen because it was much more than that and much more than 'By any means necessary.' The message is a lot deeper than that. And the fact that they allowed parts of the film to be shot in Mecca, when no one else was granted that privilege, indicates that there is some kind of force that is still happening, that's still alive for a lot of other people. So, boy, I'm

like you, I guess, I really want to see this thing complete. Will we ever?

DENZEL WASHINGTON

A previous collaborator with director Spike Lee in *Mo' Better Blues*, Denzel Washington is one of today's most outstanding actors who was introduced to the New York theater audience a decade ago in the role of Malcolm X in a play titled *When The Chickens Come Home To Roost*. Among Washington's other stellar credits are his roles in *A Soldier's Story*, *Carbon Copy*, *The Mighty Quinn*, *Heart Condition*, *Ricochet*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Cry Freedom* (for which he was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Supporting Actor category) and *Glory* (for which he won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor)

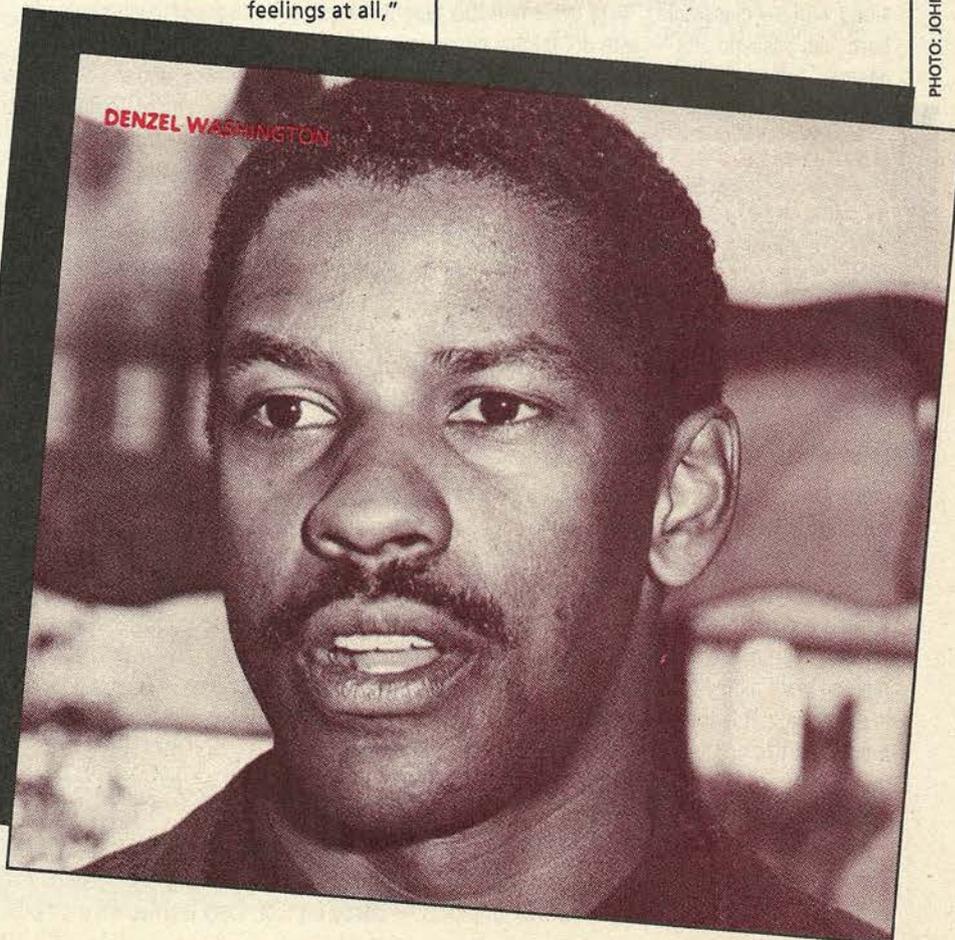
To prepare for his role as Malcolm X, Denzel Washington moved to New York and lived with members of the Nation Of Islam, read everything about Malcolm X that he could find and listened to the speeches of the great Black leader. "They were very cooperative — no hard feelings at all,"

said Washington in a *New York Magazine* article. "A lot of people loved Malcolm and wanted to protect that."

Of his role as Malcolm X, Washington indicated that the responsibility of portraying a political icon of such magnitude was constantly on his mind. "The key for me was spirit," said Washington. "I've told people, and I'll continue to say, that I can't be Malcolm X. I'm not Malcolm X. I'm Denzel. But I know that the same spirit, the same God that moved him, can move through me. That was my desire and my prayer — to be moved by the same spirit he was moved by.

"I keep going back to the word 'evolution'," continued Washington, "because we all have to evolve and we all have to take a good look at where we are. It takes discipline, a lot of it. Malcolm made a lot of mistakes, but he was constantly evolving, constantly growing — and I think that's the essence of the human condition and what's important to know about this character."

With his portrayal of Malcolm X, Washington's career as a major screen star is sure to be forever cemented in the film world's hall of fame. At presstime, Washington was an odds-on favorite for an Academy Award nomination for his role in the movie. And if judging his talent by his impressive list of screen, stage and television work, then it certainly is not premature to predict that Washington may just be taking home that Best Actor Oscar come awards time.



From the beginning of American history, historians of various ethnicities have been either neglected or altered in American education. My earliest recollection from childhood?...a simple awareness of being; of having a mother, of having a father, of having five sisters. My family was intentionally large and naturally loving.

A CLOSING TRIBUTE TO MALCOLM X EDUCATION

IS OUR PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE

Black, and we were Black. My family drew on the most positive aspects of our culture and in spite of the menial portrayals of our race, we were raised to be proud. We learned of the great Blacks of Africa, the Middle East, Europe, South and Central America, the West Indies, and the United States: Marcus Garvey, Robert Browning, Muhammad, Nat Turner, Cleopatra, Alexandre Dumas, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nzinga, Denmark Vesey, Beethoven, W.E.B. DuBois, Phyllis Wheatley, Kwame Nkrumah, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Charles Drew, Ralph Bunche, Moses, Mary McCleod Bethune, Scott Joplin and King Tut.

The introduction into the social setting of the classroom is where the confusion began as I, along with my classmates, were systematically taught the voluminous accomplishments of European descendants — with occasional comments on a few “coloreds” that historians deemed noteworthy. It was a gradual teaching that I was of an inferior race, and the disacknowledgement of Black achievement, in relation to both American and World histories, inevitably engendered pity and a lack of respect for my race as a whole.

Thus, from a very young age, I was forced to not only question “who” I was, but “what” I was (?). The inference of my race as being “lazy,” “learning disabled,” “criminal-minded,” followers and never leaders,” and “having no united front” totally contradicted the education I had been receiving at home — from my parents — who were well steeped in both education and

culture. It has been documented that a race of people are incapable of properly facing the future without knowing its past...without knowing its capabilities. (*“A tree cannot grow without its roots.” — Malcolm X*)

Still licking their wounds, inflicted by irrational racism during an era when the social status of Whites in America was becoming threatened by the new class of “freedmen,” my parents worked overtime to ensure that their children had the best that life could offer. Education and religion were highly valued in my household. Peoples of African descent have never been lacking in spirituality. It is the one thing of which we were not robbed. But being denied an education for more than two centuries, however, kept us at a large disadvantage — as it did for the earlier immigrants of Europe. Furthermore, we were brought against our will and subjected to a dehumanizing agenda.

My mother is an educator by profession, and my father was a self-educated minister by both status and profession. Both traveled worldwide, and both were well read. Their knowledge of the world, its practices and institutions was empirical — based on fact. They learned on their own

For more than two centuries, family solidarity was prevented by practices rooted in the slave trade; spouses were separated, and their children were sold. In my home, in hopes of fostering a sense of security and self-worth, our African heritage was promulgated within our household at its earliest inception. Our dolls were Black, our paintings were

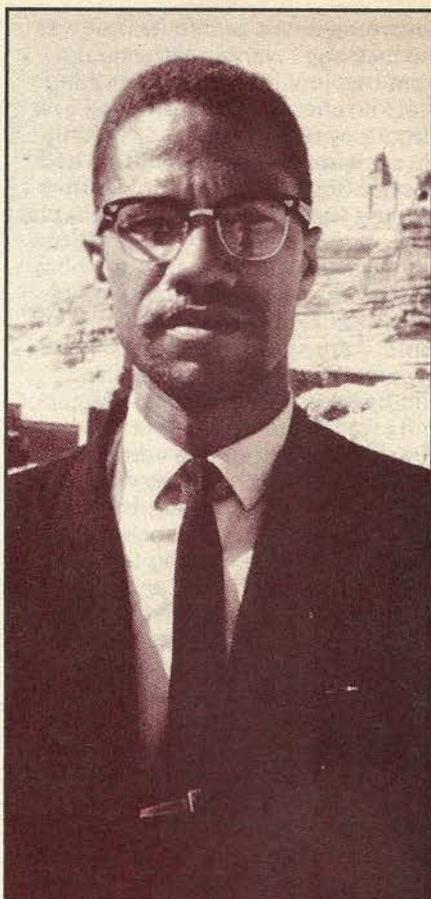


Photo: John Laurois/Black Star Agency

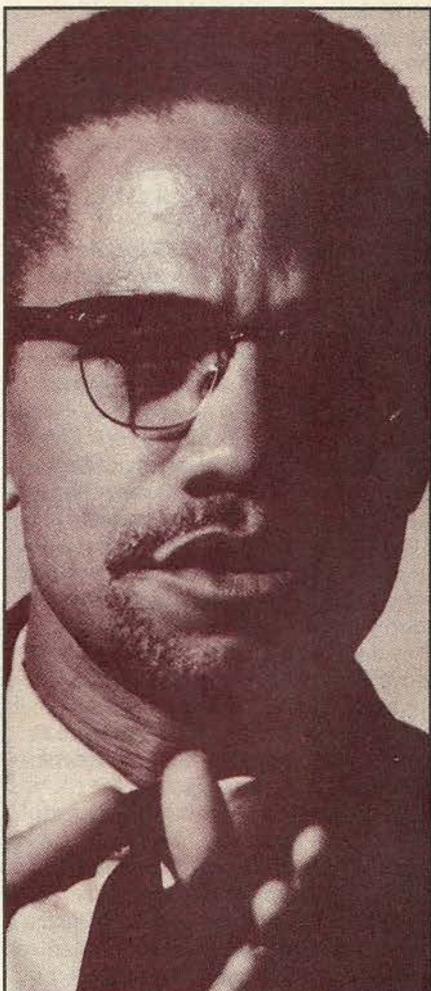


Photo: John Laurois/Black Star Agency

The greatest tool of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. —
Malcolm X

what America chose not to teach them. They were well aware that the educational institutions focus was to glorify their own merits while undermining the psychological fiber of Native Americans, African-Americans, Latinos, Chicanos, Asians, women, poor Whites and the physically impaired in the most derogatory way possible.

Tarzan, chief of the jungle — swinging on vines as transportation — ruling over the incompetent Africans who are clearly incapable of functioning without the assistance of Mr. Tarzan and his beloved mistress, Jane. Where did these two come from? When we learn about Africa, we ingest a sense of shame and dependence.

This method of education serves to validate society's claim that people of African descent are an "innately inferior race." Furthermore, it was believed by Blacks and Whites that because White ancestry was common among the high-achieving Blacks, their success was due to a genetic superiority — based on their White ancestry. Slaveowners did what was necessary to ensure that we were ignorant, dependent and subservient while glorifying their own fantasies. If we were in fact incompetent and clearly incapable of productivity, why then did glorious civilizations of Africa flourish at a time when Europeans were living in caves? Why were we shipped throughout the world

to 1) make economies and to 2) make economies marketable: agriculture, architecture, literature, philosophy, music, science, math, technology?

African slave labor was the sole source of productivity that made America an economic world power in less than 400 years. The dome of the capitol was designed and built by an African-American architect in which the president resides today. In the literary realm, *The Three Musketeers* was written by a man of African descent.

We cannot continue to delude ourselves with guns, drugs nor ignorance. This results in preventing a united bond among us to reclaim our history and understand the importance of retaining such information to properly function in the world.

The Great Sphinx of Ghizeh, which welcomes one to the magnificent pyramids, had African features which represented the pride taken in our beauty and craftsmanship, to say the least. Napoleon, the great European, ordered this sculpture's African features to be destroyed. In addition, reference is always made to the structures of Incan temples, but rarely made to the more sophisticated ancient temples of Zimbabwe.

African-Americans who acquire such knowledge and profess pride in their ethnicity are labeled as "troublemakers" or "militants" being either prosecuted (as Nelson

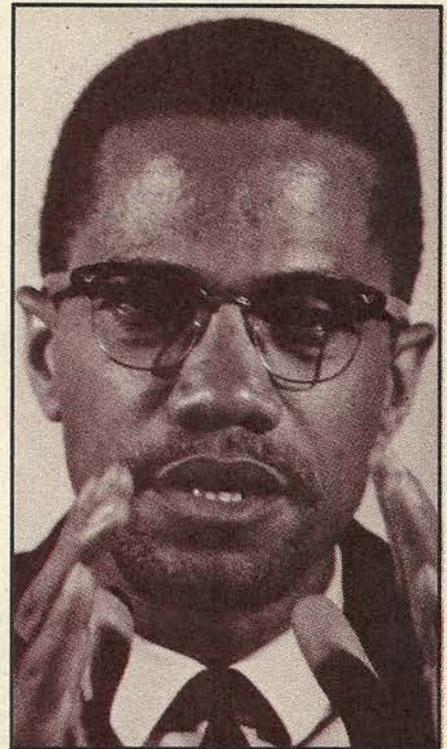


Photo: John Launois/Black Star Agency

Mandela) or assassinated (as Malcolm X). Let's face it, the educational curriculum that was created by "conservative" America long ago just ain't workin'. When credible African-American scholars assume the responsibility of providing a curriculum for their youth, as do those in the Jewish faith, high achievers are produced. This type of curriculum does not promote racism, contrary to popular belief. It reinforces a sense of security, respect and motivation to research, learn, produce and share. It embodies the belief that in order to have a cohesive society, we must have a society which is respectful of self and respectful of differences.

Quite naturally, my parents wanted the best for their girls. With the busing of Black children to White schools after the passing of Brown vs. the Board of Education, one found the quality of education diminishing. Most White parents removed their children from the public schools, sending them to private schools. My parents saw to it that we attended the best of schools. In addition, we had cultural language and history tutors, classical and ethnic dance lessons, music lessons, and summers spent with Native Americans and Quakers in Vermont. All of this was done not to keep us up to par with our White peers, but to keep us one step ahead in both education and culture. This was perceived by my parents as being the prerequisites for a sound and fulfilling future.

Because of the tutelage of my parents, I

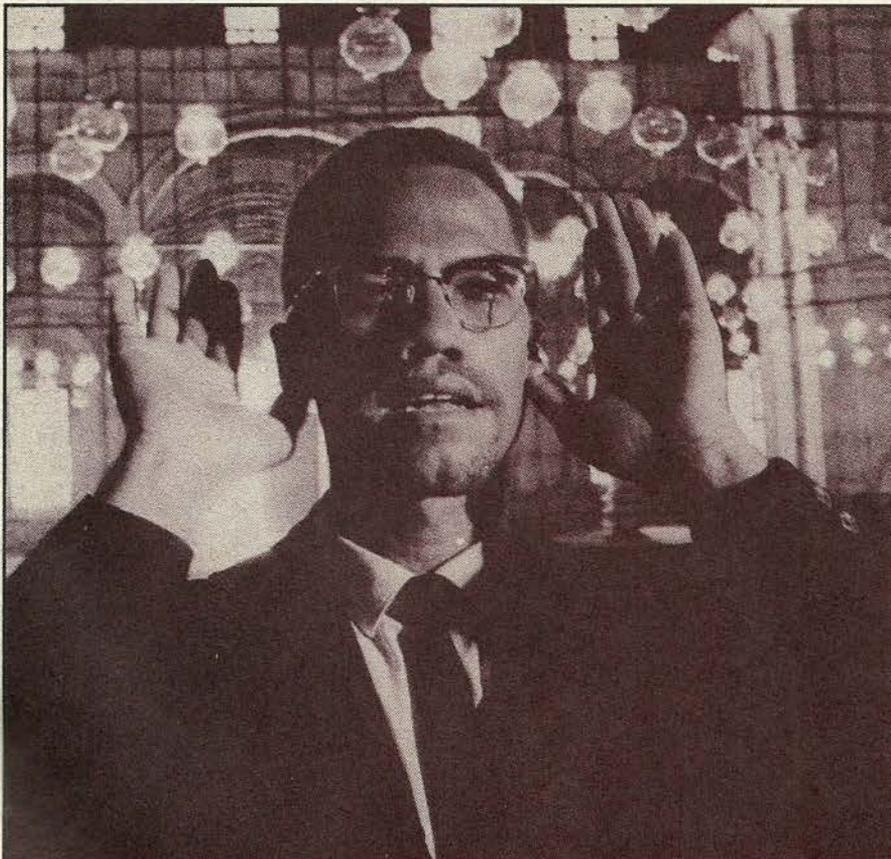
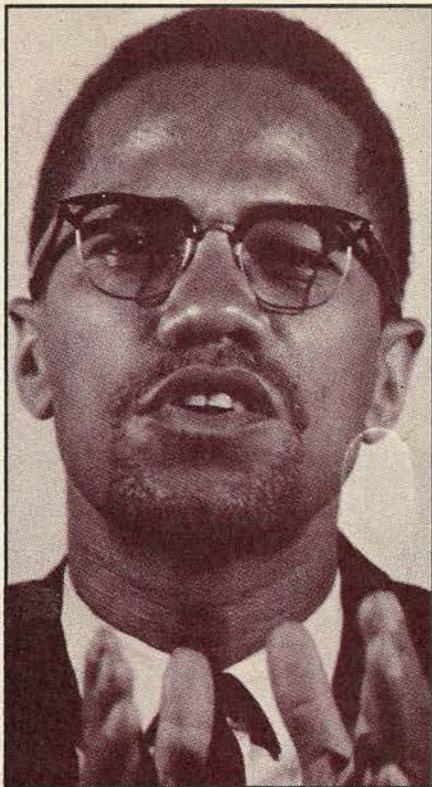


Photo: John Launois/Black Star Agency



grew up with a deep sense of self-respect and pride in spite of the insults portrayed. Unlike other ethnic groups, ethnicity was not a prerequisite to socialize; good manners, moral ethics and a high regard for mankind played vital roles. Due to a diverse and multi-cultural background, co-existence for my sisters and me was a natural process. I was never inhibited or made to feel uncomfortable when confronted by or engaged with members of another culture. I do recall, however, the ignorant and tactless remarks made by those who prejudged my race as being inferior.

Over the past year, I have traveled to academic institutions and to lock-up facilities stressing the importance of education and the implementation of a multi-cultural curriculum. With such, one can gain understanding, respect and motivation to alleviate the social ills that we are confronted with daily.

Through my travels and early learning and teaching experiences, I have found that by structuring the learning environment with material by which students can digest, they were more eager and apt to learn, having a greater respect for self as well as others. After all, America is the "melting pot" of diverse ethnicities.

My educational experience has enabled me to both understand and be sensitive to America's people, historical contributions, and social conditions having a great influ-

ence on their plights and successes, and adaptations into mainstream America. Miseducation, however, inhibits the full potential of a nation.

My father stated, "Education is an important element in the struggle for human rights. It is the means to help our children and people rediscover their identity and thereby increase self-respect. Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

If you sport an "X" cap or any "X" paraphernalia, research and understand your brother, Malcolm. Today, as it is important to commemorate Malcolm X (El Hajj Malik Shabazz) by the brothers and sisters that he not only fought for, but died hence, it is equally important to understand his philosophy and not attribute characteristics he did not display or possess. His statements are often taken out of context. Malcolm X did not travel with a loaded rifle in his back pocket nor underneath his coat. He did not advocate violence. His intention was not to promote racism.

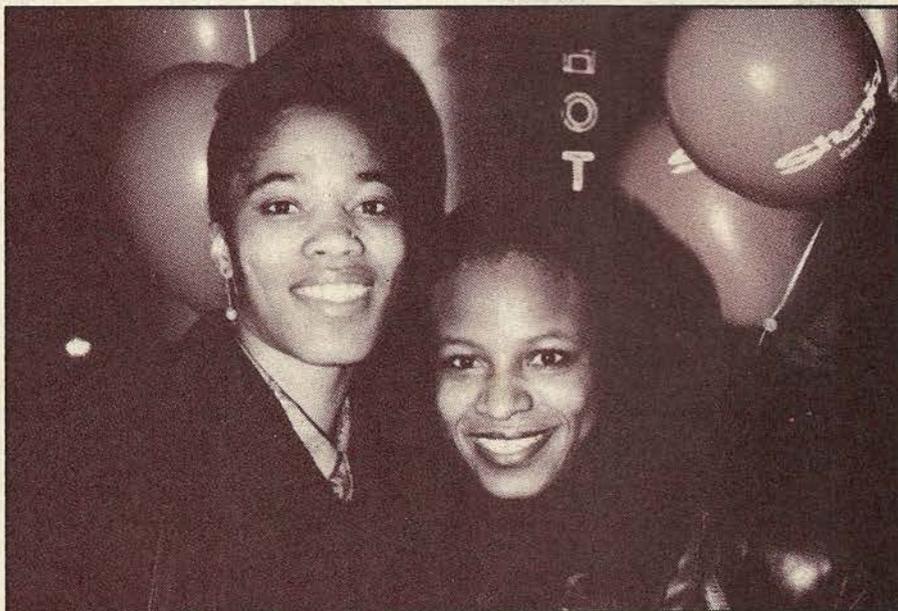
Malcolm X attempted to undermine the injustices of the supremacist's institutions and the falsehoods on which they were based; thereby, to rectify the dilemmas that we have encountered for far too long at the defense of our humanity "by any means necessary."

The institution of racism was primarily implemented to maintain the social and economic status quo of White male superiority over the remaining people. To have been classified a "racist" by the perpetrator of this system is quite ironic. It is only natural to dislike an oppressor and its oppressive ele-

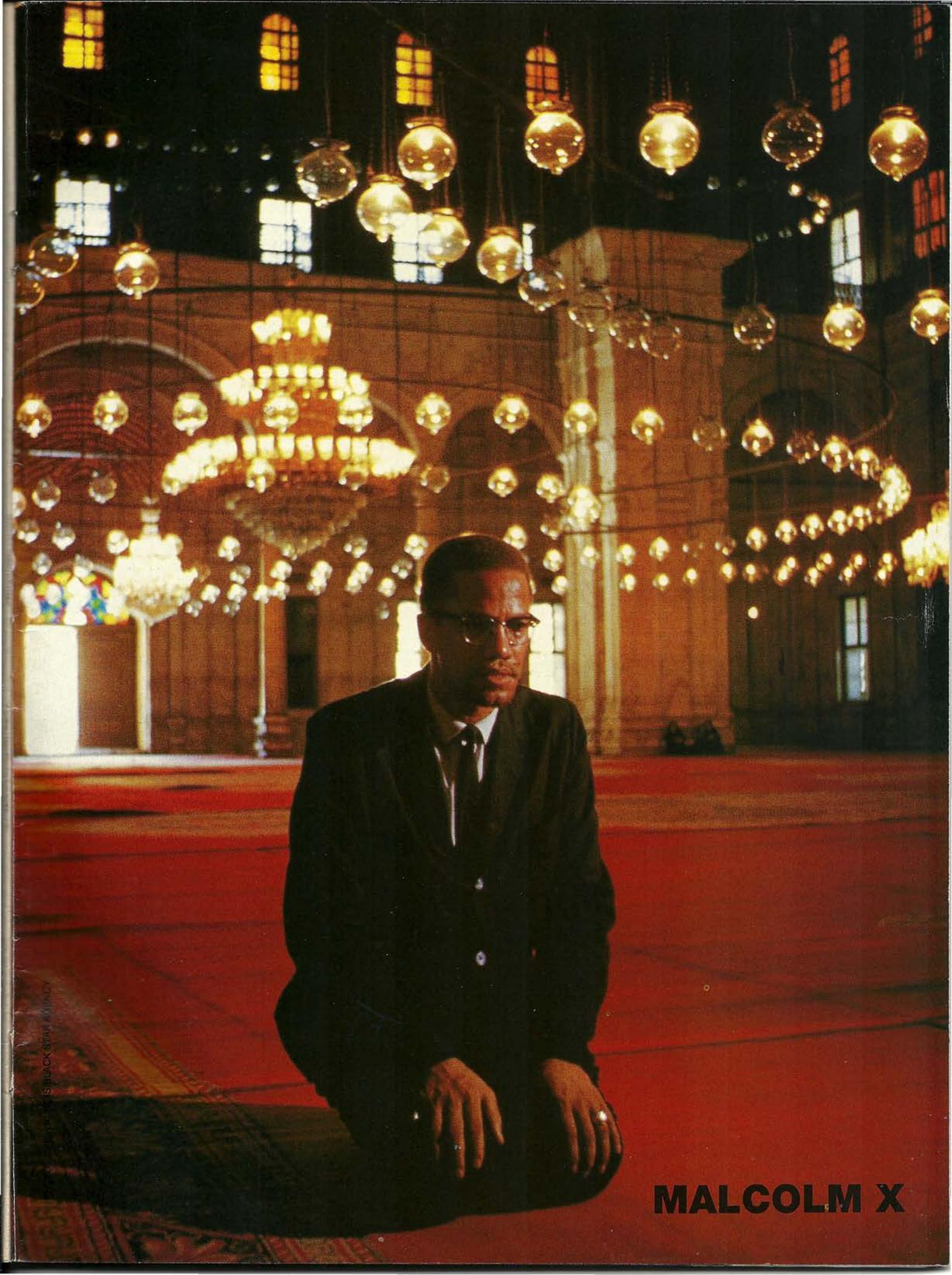
ment. Malcolm X did not engender hatred for White America nor White people as a whole. He advocated *brotherhood*, which encompasses all of mankind. Malcolm X was instrumental in fueling fire on an already existing coal of discomfort. Throughout the history of slavery, Black America was denied an education. We were miseducated about our place within world events. One has to simply question the rationale behind concealing historical facts — to strategically attempt to negate the merits of another. (*"It is always better to form the habit of learning how to see things for yourself; then you are in a better position to judge for yourself."* — Malcolm X)

We cannot focus on our faults without focusing on ways to improve them. We cannot expect to earn the respect of others until we first learn to respect ourselves. We've got to treat the brothers right, the sisters right and each other right. We must support a cohesive agenda that will enable us to minimize the self-destruction that was encouraged during slavery. We need to understand that this was a necessary tactic exercised to maintain the repressive order. The rewards from education are great. It produces strong individuals. Our great scholars have fought to instill such values that will inspire us to research, study, learn and share. Those of us who are able should assist those of us who are not. And as Naughty By Nature said, despite the setback, "Everything's Gonna Be Alright."

With all my love, support and understanding. Peace!



Ilyasah Shabazz and editor Kate Ferguson.



SHUBACK STRAT AGENCY

MALCOLM X

**DENZEL
WASHINGTON
as Malcolm X**



PHOTO: DAVID LEE/COURTESY WARNER BROS.

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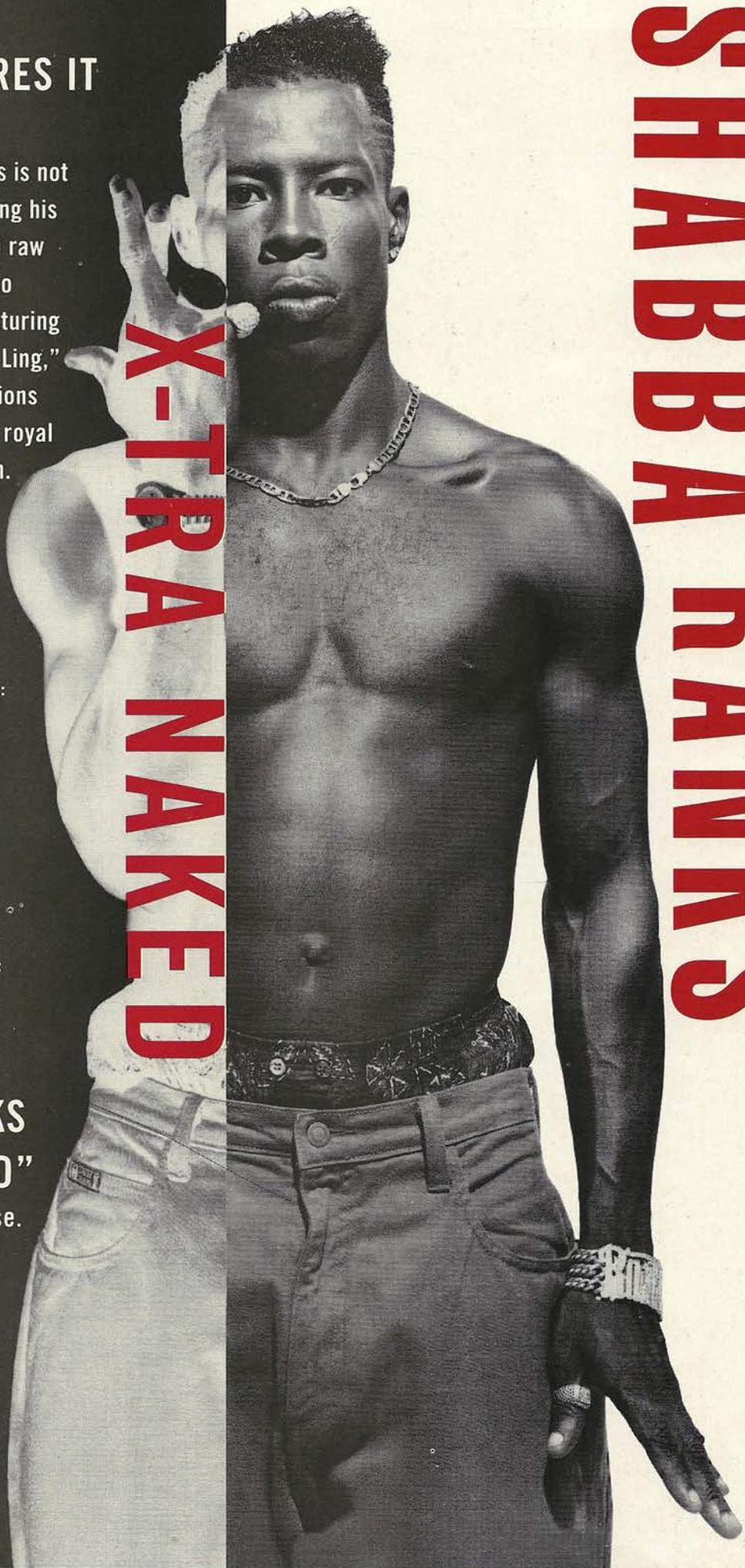
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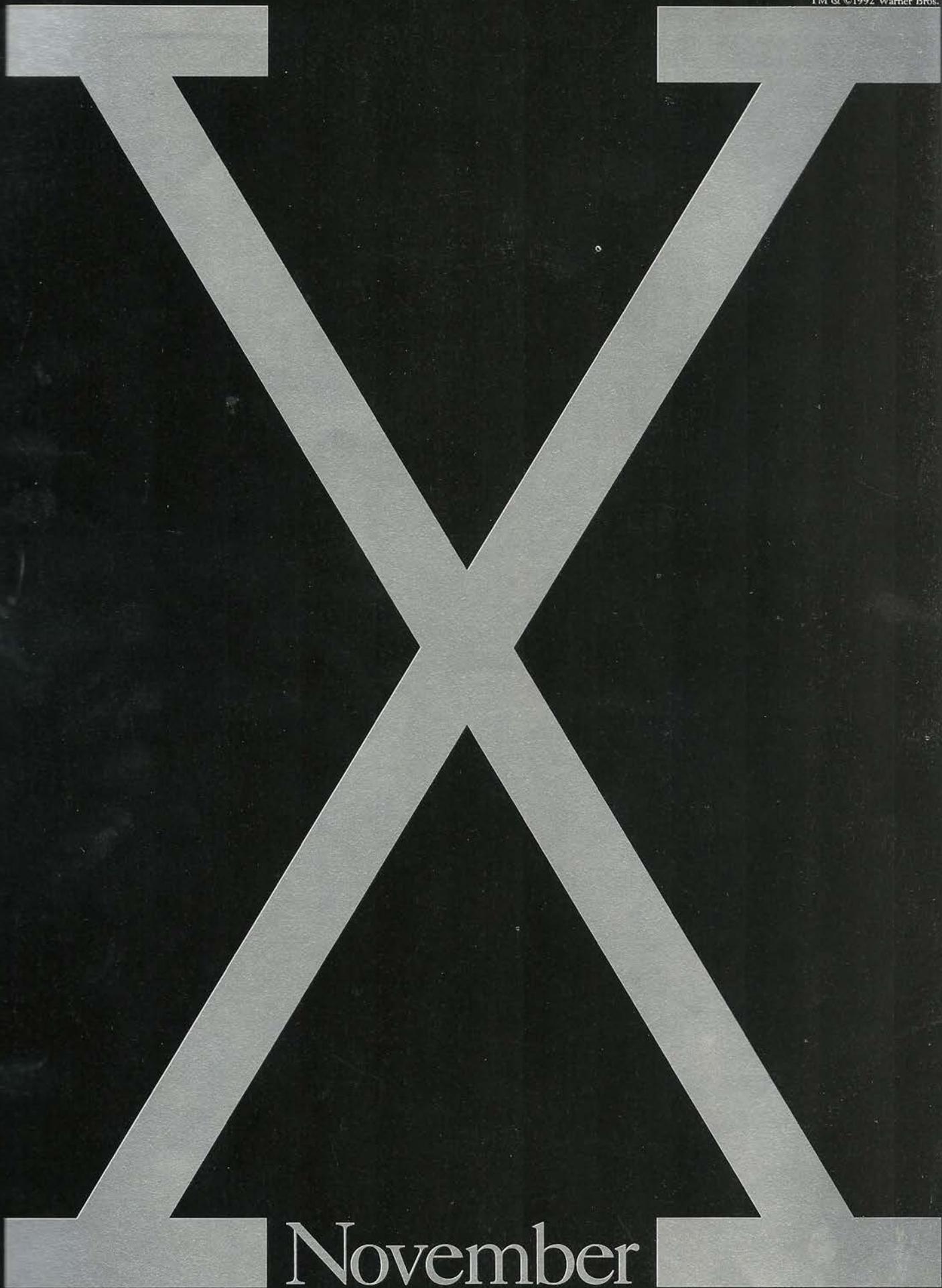


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SHABBA RANKS

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November