

Will Scandal Destroy The Black Muslims?

Chicagoans couldn't believe their own ears. Yet, there it was coming over their radios, loud and clear. The young minister was denouncing his own father as a religious phony, a hypocrite, a power-mad dictator and a woman chaser. Such a denunciation coming from any minister would have been unusual, in this case it was fantastic.

The minister making the accusations was Wallace D. Muhammad, at one time the heir apparent and first in line of succession to the national leadership of more than 250,000 Black Muslims. He was referring to his father, Elijah Muhammad, a 67-year-old founder and absolute ruler of the black supremacist sect.

The sensational charges leveled by the younger Muhammad during an interview on a Chicago news program marked the climax of a scandal which is threatening to disgrace his father and wreck the national movement which the elder Muhammad started as a storefront church more than 30 years ago.

The mushrooming scandal first came to light in late June of this year when two attractive women—both in their early twenties—filed paternity suits in Los Angeles naming the asthina-suffering, fez-wearing, runty little religious leader as father of their children.

The women, both of whom claim they once worked as private secretaries to Muhammad, charge in their suits that he had persuaded them to have relations with him after convincing each of them that she alone had been "divinely selected" to be his best partner and part-time bride. In fact, the girls were so devout in their faith that they never questioned their Harlem-like existence and continued their illicit relationships with the self-styled "prophet of Allah" even after giving birth to his babies.

One of the young women, Miss Lucille Royce, of Boston, Mass., claims in her petition that she has borne two of

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don't believe their own ears. Yet, there it was, clear as day, loud and clear. The young minister accused his own father as a religious phony, a hypocrite.

The denunciation coming from a young man and a woman would have been regarded as fantastic. The young man, Muhammad, was making the accusations against his father, Elijah Muhammad, at one of the national leadership conferences of the Black Muslims.

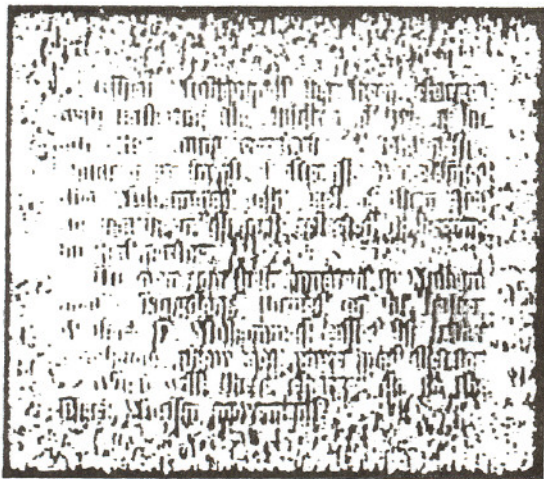
His father, Elijah Muhammad, is a 60-year-old founder and leader of the black supremacist movement which started as a store in Chicago more than 30 years ago.

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Both women claim to be private secretaries of Muhammad and are suing him in their suits. They charged him with seducing them to have children. After convincing them alone had been his bed partner. In fact, the women in their faith that they had seduced their harlem-styled their illicit relationship self-styled "propaganda" giving birth to

women, Miss Lu-

Muhammad's babies and is expecting a third. The other woman, Miss Evelyn Williams, also of Boston, has accused Muhammad of fathering her two children. The irony of their charges lies in the fact that each woman has a four-year-old child and that these children were apparently conceived at approximately the same time.



Muhammad, visibly shaken by the girls' damaging accusations which he has braided as outright lies, has rallied his top lieutenants about him to formulate a battle plan. With his religious empire tottering on the brink of disaster, he faces his greatest crisis later this month when the two paternity cases are scheduled to be heard in a public courtroom.

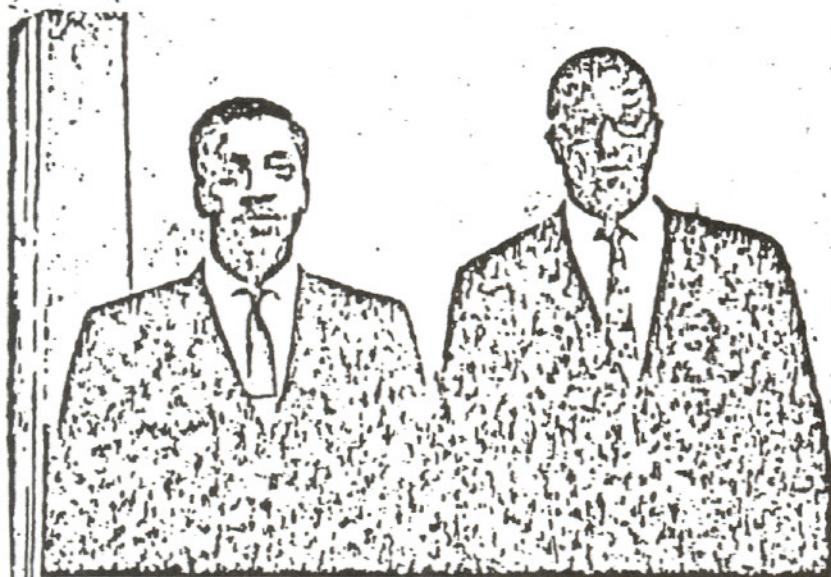
Muhammad has already indicated his probable defense strategy. Two weeks after the two women filed their suits, his Chicago headquarters issued a press statement describing the paternity scandal as a "vicious scheme" which was hatched by Muhammad's former chief lieutenant, Malcolm X.

The statement alleged that Malcolm had once conducted romances with both young women involved in the case and that he at one time had been engaged to one of the girls. "Obviously," said the statement, "this is just another attempt to smear the name of the honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Black Muslim movement."

While Muhammad's commanders mounted their offensive against Malcolm, the enemy opened up its second front with a surprise attack from within. Young Wallace Muhammad took to the air waves with his devastating attack on his father.

"I have resigned from the movement," Wallace announced, "because I no longer can stand the corruption and hypocrisy being practiced by my father and his cohorts."





When Wallace Muhammad (left) denounced father and resigned from Black Muslim movement, Jeremiah X Pugh (right) replaced him in organization. Many Wallace supporters also resigned from the sect.

Black Muslims continued

Muhammad more interested in leading young girls to boudoir, says son, than leading his followers to the promised land

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"gangsters and racketeers," intimidating and beating followers who fail to come up with weekly contributions to the movement.

Followers, he said, are required to donate anywhere from \$6 to \$13 weekly regardless of their personal financial condition. They are also required to sell their share of copies of the movement's newspaper, Muhammad Speaks. The weekly proceeds from the newspaper and personal contributions, Wallace claimed, amount to "many thousands of dollars, most of which are used to provide for the personal comfort and luxury of my father and certain chosen staff members."

"My father owns two plush homes," Wallace noted, "one in Chicago with 19 rooms, and another in Phoenix, Arizona, with 17 rooms. He built the Phoenix home from the ground up at a cost exceeding \$100,000."

Regarding his father's black supremacist teachings, Wallace said: "My father, himself, doesn't believe a lot of what he preaches. Hatred of white people is taught in Black Muslim temples because that's what many of the followers want to hear. It attracts people to the movement."

Such accusations, coming from the mouth of Muhammad's son, the very man he had chosen to succeed him, had the explosive effect of a super bomb exploded in a closet.

Every Muslim follower over seven years old is taught that all white people are devils—including priests, judges, physicians, scientists, politicians—anyone of Caucasian birth. Followers are also



The women of Islam are shown applauding Muham at a rally. The white-clad females are typical of th Black Muslim movement.



The women of Islam are shown applauding Muhammad during speech-making at a rally. The white-clad females are typical of the followers of the Black Muslim movement.

An equally important tenet in Muslim doctrine is respect for the holy institution of marriage. Muslim men are urged to respect their wives and women folk with their lives if necessary; Muslim women are told that adultery and fornication are the worst possible sins they can commit.

Muhammad has for years been regarded as a kind of semi-deity, a holy prophet divinely appointed by Allah, God of the Islam world. His mission, Muhammad has often told worshippers, is to "free" America's twenty million Negroes from the white man's domination. His plan for accomplishing this feat is to convince Congress to set aside a large tract of land, the size of a state, where Negroes could set up their own government, build their own factories, schools and office buildings and live completely independent of the white man.

But, according to Wallace Muhammad, despite his father's lofty ambitions, he apparently is more interested in leading pretty young girls to his boudoir than he is in leading his followers to the promised land.

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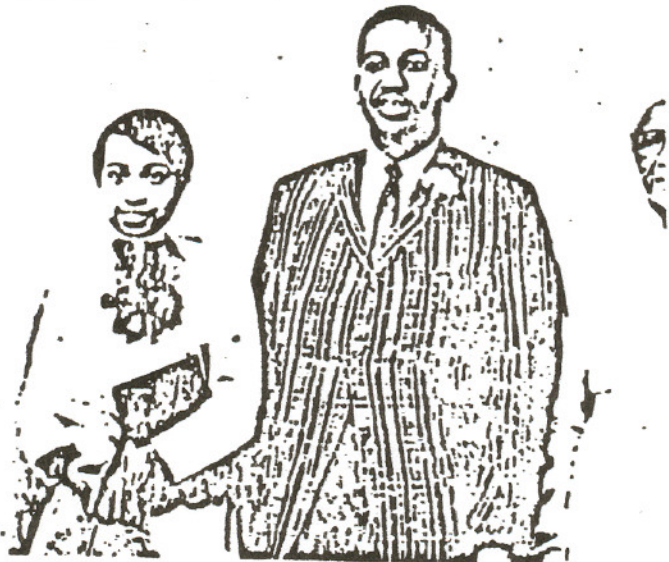
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Muhammad's granddaughters flank Dr. Lonnie Cross, former Atlanta University mathematics professor. Chata Marie is on the left and Saundra on the right. Muhammad, facing paternity charges from two former secretaries, has eight grown children and numerous grand children.



...ever, since the sex scandal broke out, men have been leaving the Black Muslim organization in droves.



This rare photo shows Elijah Muhammad's wife, Clara, right, with her youngest son, former wife, Harriet. This is one of the few photos ever taken of Clara Muhammad, married an Egyptian girl after obtaining divorce from Harriet, who now lives in L.

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men in the movement and has at least four illegitimate children former secretaries.

Despite Wallace's declaration of war on his father, the elder Muhammad still enjoys the admiration and support of the rest of family including seven older children, all of whom regard their long-willed younger brother as an ungrateful black sheep who has yed from the fold.

Wallace's defection was a particularly bitter pill for his father wallow since Muhammad had always told followers that the th would one day succeed him as leader of the movement. It Wallace upon whom Muhammad had lavished praise and affec- Wallace who had been his father's favorite child.

'Malcolm Poisoned Wallace's Mind With Lies'

One elderly official of the movement, a firm supporter of Mu- mad, blames the rift between father and son on Malcolm X. many followers who remain faithful to Muhammad, he believes Malcolm influenced Wallace to turn against his dad.

"Malcolm poisoned Wallace's mind with lies about the honor- Muhammad," the aging official told SEPIA. "He planned to Muhammad's own son to gain control of the movement."

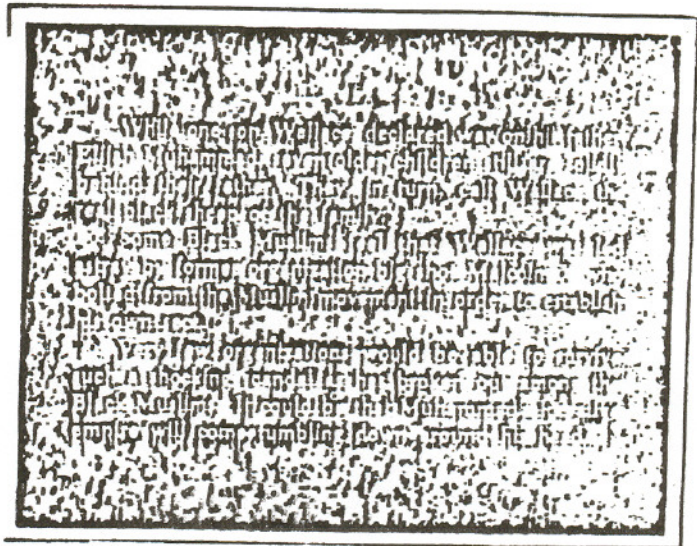
But, Wallace insists that his friend Malcolm, far from being a er, was actually a victim of jealous officials who had schemed ave him ousted.

"Those officials were jealous of Malcolm's power and popular- Wallace declares, "and they wanted him out of the way. They ed suspicions in my father's mind, telling him that Malcolm ed to take over the organization."

Finally, Wallace says, Muhammad seized upon the idea of sus- ing Malcolm after his fiery chief lieutenant had made dispar- ; remarks concerning the late President Kennedy. The now us remark made by Malcolm was delivered to a crowd of Mus- attending a rally in New York shortly after President Ken- s death last November. Malcolm referred to Kennedy's death example of "chickens coming home to roost."

My father and his aides seized upon this remark as their per- portunity to suspend Malcolm on grounds of insubordination," ce relates. "My father was reluctant to put Malcolm out of ovement for fear that too many of his supporters would follow o he suspended him instead.

Eventually, Malcolm realized that Muhammad was attempting zle him and he went to my father and demanded his rein- ent," Wallace declares. "When my father remained adamant, lm threatened to leave the organization. At this point, my



Wallace claims that the organization has lost followers steadily ever since Malcolm left and that the recent scandal has caused a wholesale defection of former worshippers.

But, although he is now encouraging followers to desert his father, the young Muhammad insists that he does not intend to form another movement or seek leadership of the dissident faction.

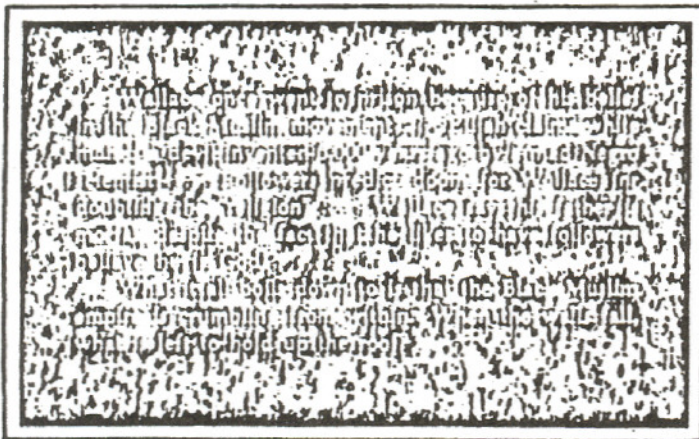
"I'm a member of a family that the world will soon see as wor- shippers of dollars—the golden calf, as it is called in the Bible," he says. "By me being in the family, as much a part of it as my sisters and brothers, I don't think I should put myself out there to be trusted. I cannot now say to my father's followers, 'now you trust me.' It would be expecting too much of them. There's a lot of room for them to suspect me too. And, I couldn't very well blame them."

Wallace says that as a child and a teenager he believed blindly in his father and accepted without question the black supremacist tenets of the religion. He says he first began to suspect his father of hypocrisy after reading and studying extensively the old Koran, the bible of the Islam world.

"I began to realize that my father's teachings were in conflict with the founders of the very religion he was espousing," Wallace recalls. "My father claimed to be a holy prophet, divinely appointed

Black Muslims continued

His 'Spiritual Slaves' believe Muhammad is God



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Cassius Clay, surrou
to one of Elijah Mu
supporters. Champ

by Allah, but the Koran credits Muhammad Abdullah, who lived in the thirteenth century as being the last of the prophets."

"My father insisted that the white man is a devil who was invented by a mad Negro scientist 8,000 years ago, but the Koran teaches that the same God created all people, black, yellow and white."

Despite his doubts Wallace says he remained with the movement and supported his father until January of 1963.

"I even went to prison as a draft evader because of my father's influence," Wallace reveals. "I was sentenced to three years in prison for failing to report to Elgin State Hospital (Illinois) for non-military service after I refused to register on grounds of my religion."

'He Doesn't Believe What He Preaches'

Wallace says his father taught followers that they would be disobeying the laws of Allah and the holy Koran if they fought in any wars but religious wars ordered by Allah.

But, Wallace now admits, orthodox American Moslems have not refused to serve in the U.S. armed forces on grounds of their religion. "I realized later," he says, "that this was just another law created by my father."

Wallace has become so disenchanted with his father in recent years that he doubts his father believes in most of what he himself preaches.

"He believes in his ability to keep the followers duped," Wallace says bitterly. "He knows he has people who are spiritual slaves to him and believe he is God. In fact, one follower told me recently that when he prays, he sees my father as God. I wasn't really surprised because my father has left a lot of room for his followers to see him as God."

Shunning the opportunity to reply personally to his son's public attack on him, Muhammad has chosen instead to answer Wallace indirectly, through his official newspaper, "Muhammad Speaks," and through top aides in his Chicago headquarters.



How's this for a controversial pair? This unwar
years ago when Cuban Premier Fidel Castro