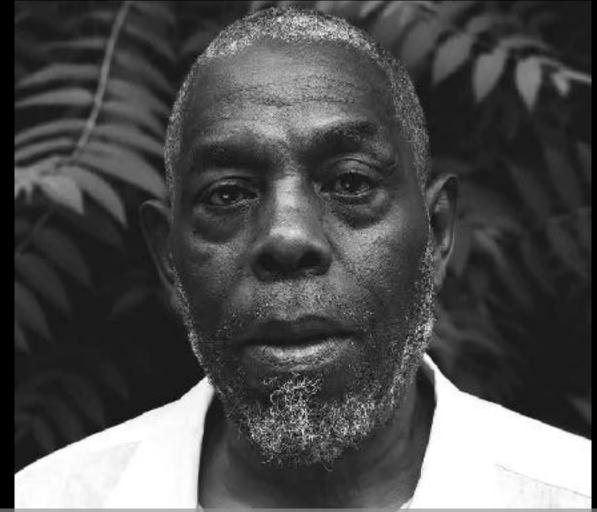
# Re-Build!

A New Afrikan Independence Movement Periodical



In Memory of a New Afrikan Movement Builder
Sheikh Bilal Sunni-Ali

1948-2024



Free The Land!

# The New Afrikan Creed

- 1. i believe in the spirituality, humanity and genius of Black People, and in Our new pursuit of these values.
- 2. i believe in the family and the community, and in the community as a family, and i will work to make this concept live.
- 3. i believe in the community as more important than the individual.
- 4. i believe in constant struggle for freedom, to end oppression and build a better world. i believe in collective struggle; in fashioning victory in concert with my brothers and sisters.
- 5. i believe that the fundamental reason Our oppression continues is that We, as a people, lack the power to control Our lives.
- 6. i believe that the fundamental way to gain that power, and end oppression, is to build a sovereign Black Nation.
- 7. i believe that all the land in America, upon which We have lived for a long time, which We have worked and built upon, and which We have fought to stay on, is land that belongs to us as a people.
- 8. i believe in the Malcolm X Doctrine: that We must organize upon this land, and hold a plebiscite, to tell the world by a vote that We are free and Our land independent, and that after the vote, We must stand ready to defend Ourselves, establishing the nation beyond contradiction.

- 9. Therefore, i pledge to struggle without cease until We have won sovereignty. i pledge to struggle without fail until We have built a better condition than the world has yet known.
- 10. i will give my life, if that is necessary. i will give my time, my mind, my strength and my wealth because this is necessary.
- 11. i will follow my chosen leaders and help them.
- 12. i will love my brothers and sisters as myself.
- 13. i will steal nothing from a brother or sister, cheat no brother or sister, misuse no brother or sister, inform on no brother or sister, and spread no
- 14. i will keep myself clean in body, dress and speech, knowing that i am a light set on a hill, a true representative of what We are building.
- 15. i will be patient and uplifting with my brothers and sisters\* and i will seek by word and by deed to heal the black family; to bring into the movement and into the community, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters left by the wayside.

Now, freely and of my own will, i pledge this creed, for the sake of freedom for my people and a better world, on pain of disgrace and banishment if i prove false. For i am, by the inspiration of Our ancestors and the Grace of Our Creator— a New Afrikan.

# My Dearest Daddy

by Fatihah A. Sunni-Ali

My Dearest Daddy

I miss you so much. This hurts more than anything...You are my whole world. Teaching me, guiding me, loving me. Giving the best hugs n Garlic kisses. Those talks that were more than talks. Realizing later that they were lessons. My Daddy always dropping gems. I love hearing your sax well any of your instruments n the fact that u could play anything and even whistle any tune. The way u used to whistle the names of me and my siblings. It made me feel so special. My own lil melody to my name. We all had a special whistle for our name and the way u whistled our name was just. So, Bilal Sunni-Ali so Daddy. I enjoyed the best part of my child hood with u.. So forgiving of me when I found it hard to forgive myself...Reminding me I can call home and cry

anytime...Thank u so much for that you mean so much to me. Those



hugs were the best... I don't know what I'll miss most. The talks, the hugs, the laughs, the music. I'm sure I'll miss EVERYTHING.I know you r always with me...giving me the best hugs.

Always Your Daughter,

**Fatihah** 

# **Pops**

Pops, I still feel you in the quiet moments, in the warmth of the sun, and in the wind that rushes past me. You said, 'look for me in the whirlwind,' and now I understand. You are in the unseen forces that shape our life, in the strength that carries us forward, and in the whispers of wisdom that echo in our heart. Though you are no longer here in the physical, you are never far. I miss you, I love you, and I will always "look for you in the whirlwind."

Your Son,

Warren Jackson

# In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful An Open Letter to My Baba, Bilal Sunni-Ali

by Aiyisha T. Obafemi

Baba,

From the moment you came into my life at 8 years old, you were more than a father—you were a force. A teacher, a warrior, a revolutionary whose presence was as powerful as the music you played and the struggles you dedicated your life to.

You were the Spirit of the Midnight Band, the heartbeat of a movement, the rhythm of resistance. Whether it was the saxophone, the flute, the clarinet, or the harmonica, you played with purpose, turning sound into stories, melodies into messages, and music into a movement. When teaching me to play the flute, you taught me that music is more than just notes—it is breath, it is power, it is revolution. Every time I hear those sounds, I hear you.

But your fight for liberation extended far beyond the music. As a founding member of the Bronx and Harlem

chapters of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika, you dedicated your life to the struggle for Black freedom. You stood on the front lines, not just in protest, but in action—organizing, building, and fighting for a future where our people could live with dignity, self-determination, and power.

As the Amir of the Imam Jamil Action Network, you fought tirelessly for the freedom of Imam Jamil Al-Amin, refusing to



let his name be erased or his fight forgotten. You carried the weight of our political prisoners and prisoners of war, ensuring their stories were told, their struggles uplifted, and their freedom pursued with the same unwavering dedication you brought to every battle for justice. You never wavered, never compromised, never let the movement rest.

And through it all, you, Mama and Baba Ahmed were the greatest coparents and comrades, raising all of your children in love, unity, and purpose. How blessed am I to have had not one, but two incredible fathers. How blessed am I to be a daddy's girl to two men whose lives embodied love, sacrifice, and revolution. And oh, how you loved my Mama. Fiercely, deeply, without hesitation. That love was its own kind of freedom song, a reflection of the devotion and passion you brought to everything you touched. Your music will never stop playing. Your lessons will never stop teaching. Your

fight will never stop inspiring. Your spirit will never stop guiding me. I will look for you in the Whirlwind.

Rest in power, Baba. I carry you with me always.

With love, honor, and endless gratitude... Your Daughter,

Aiyisha T. Obafemi Free The Land.. By Any Means Necessary!!

# Letter to My Father

by MdaiYah EfuaAta Shakura Sunni-Ali-Yisrael

My Daddy,

Bilal Sunni-Ali, the absolute best father in the world. The best husband and grandfather. I watched you cherish and take care of my mother in her last days, and I marveled at how you would walk in the room and the first thing you would do was kiss her on her lips, tell her nakupenda and then proceed to wash her face and rub oil on her beautiful face. My heart broke at the sight of you holding her in your arms after she took her last breath, I was and will always be in awe of you all's sweet revolutionary love.

Peace Darling... Peace Daddy... That was our normal greeting. I keep finding myself waiting for your call or text, sending me links about meetings and demonstrations... Updates on Imam Jamil or other Freedom Fighters/Political Prisoners. I check my phone and await your text to tell me that you're ready or how much you weigh and that you took your meds. I keep checking my vm to hear you say, MdaiYah it's me daddy, however all I have are our memories and I'm cherishing them daily...

I reminisce on the times you were there to welcome each one of my babies into this world as you whispered the prayers in the ears, their first introduction to their Pop, was his undying love for his faith, I loved how you cradled each one of them and looked at them with the warmest smile of love and pride. I was so happy my children had you as their first example of a strong, cool, loving black man.

Daddy, as a child, you were my superhero, remember when you picked up that car and moved it, yoooo nobody could tell us that you weren't the strongest man in the world. Lol

Daddy, Thank you for being my father, my first love, the greatest example of true and pure love, my friend, my hero, my greatest teacher and also the one who would give it to me straight no chaser, also the one who taught my siblings and I, that love comes in many forms and the best cure to life is laughter, to keep it funny. Thank you, daddy, for loving my husband, Prince as your son and always bragging about what your son in-love is doing for the people.



Thank you, daddy, for allowing me to be your caretaker and give you just a snippet of everything you gave me, I can never repay you for all you were and will forever be to me.

The blessing of having a revolutionary as a father, is you get to be in it with him, the cells, the running, the marches, the protests, the calls, the zooms, the nation days, the joys of seeing your comrade uncles set free, the raised fist of Free The Land and Free Em All, Black Power, Pamoja Tutashinda!!!

Daddy, I remember sitting in the house/my room and id hear the first blow of your sax/flute and perk up to hear what magical sounds would come today, what tunes would I be humming and not even know what I'm humming, only that my daddy was playing this for hours and he made it sound so soothing to my soul, your music was the soundtrack of our lives and now every time I hear them and sing the songs, I know now that they were words to carry us through the great and sad times, the battle cries of our peoples victories and losses, the love ballads of the revolution.

Daddy, you taught us as very small children how to whistle and how to recognize your special whistle you had for each of us, we knew when we

heard the whistle call that we needed to pay attention and be ready to follow instruction, to be quiet or just look at you. The memories are flooding back as I write you this love letter of gratitude, the tears are flowing however the smile is here along with the chuckles.

So, daddy, I want you to know that I will always always be grateful for having you as my father, my protector. I want you know to that everything you all did was worth it. The sacrifices, the underground runs, the long nights of not knowing, the seconds, minutes, the hours, the months, and the years spent incarcerated for the people, for the cause, was all worth it and I'm so proud to be MdaiYah EfuaAta Shakura Sunni-Ali-Yisrael, your daughter.

I will never say goodbye. I will always and forever say, Nakupenda and I Will See and Look for You in The Whirlwind!!!

# "Generous, Gracious and Good:" Bilal Sunni-Ali, My Dad, The Man

by Asantewa Fulani Sunni-Ali

"If there was ever a man Who was generous, gracious and good That was my dad The man

A human being so true He could live like a king 'Cause he knew The real pleasure in life

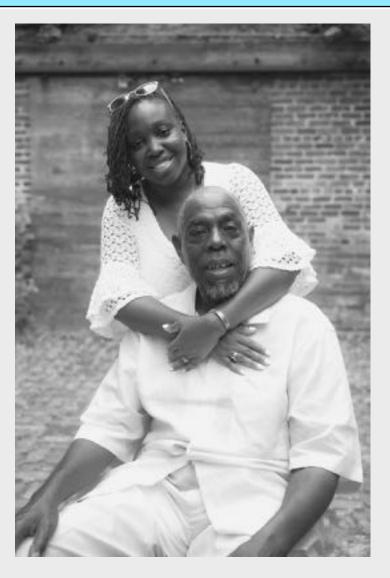
To be devoted to
And always stand by me
So I'd be unafraid and free"

Lyrics from "A Song for My Father" by Leon Thomas III

Among a beautifully dynamic collection of music from multiple genres across the African Diaspora, Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali often played "A Song for My Father" in the house and performed it publicly. It was after his transition that I listened more keenly to the words. As the words sank in, tears flowed—each one a reflection of how perfectly they

capture who he was and the way he moved through life.

In addition to music, my daddy introduced me to various forms of art, but performing arts and theatre became my greatest loves. I went from watching him perform to sharing the stage with him and weaving his music into my own plays while he cheered from the audience. We also enjoyed being audience members together, critically analyzing each performance we experienced. His influence, intentional approach to his craft and his scholarship on music and art not only deepened my appreciation for the arts but also shaped the way I create, interpret and engage with them.



More than just my daddy, Baba Bilal was my comrade, my homie, my teacher, my mentor —a walking encyclopedia and keeper of our stories. There was little I could ask him—on any subject—that he didn't have a wellthought-out answer for. Black culture, history and liberation were our favorite topics to explore together, sparking endless conversations filled with his deep knowledge, insight, and passion. He was an organic intellectual whose wisdom was personified in everything he did. Whether engaging in deep critical dialogue or cracking jokes that left everyone in tears, he carried a knowing energy that was incomparable.

From childhood to adulthood, we journeyed the world together—whether on a road trip across the South and Northeast or aboard a small boat from Belize to Guatemala.

Traveling with him was always an adventure. Those journeys were more than just movement; they were filled with lessons, laughter, and cherished moments that shaped our beautiful bond.

The loss of him in the physical is immeasurable, but being his daughter in this realm and lifetime will always be an immense honor. His legacy lives on in the music, the wisdom, the love, and the revolutionary spirit he poured into us all.

Thank you for it all, daddy, for being one of my favorite people, a Baba to my husband, Ishmael and beloved Pop to our children, Free, Sol and Kosmos.

Free The Land! Asalaam Alaikum. Nakupenda sana! I will reach out for you in the Whirlwind.

#### The Whirlwind

#### by Ishmael Muhammed

How do you talk about a whirlwind, a tornado, a tsunami in human form?

When they make landfall and wreak havoc over our lives— Fault lines, earthquakes, tidal waves, mudslides— All natural, mind you. Organically born, raised, mixed in with

Alabama spice, Louisiana seasonings, Georgia peaches, and Mississippi maple trees.

All southern baked-in goodness; homegrown earth seeds.

Loud and powerful but somehow serene, soft, peaceful—

But still shaking yo ass up, moving you, unsettling the earth you stand on. Dangerous.

And they mean no harm. The destruction they catalyze is the reason That the world we know can transform, grow, evolve, become.

It brings life but is also so life-threatening in the same breath.

They build and destroy in the same breath.

They start fires and put them out in the same breath.

The balance is precarious and precise. Can't be produced by something simply human.

There is so much more in their DNAs.

I'm speaking about a whole gang of elders who done passed away.

It is so hard when there is one to not reflect on so many others.

In many ways, in real ways, they were all brothers and sisters and mothers and fathers and comrades and friends to each other.

But then at the same time, they could do so much harm to each other—brother to brother, mother to mother—

And all it really is be growing pains.

When the earth grows, expands, creates, renews, reshapes, it's disruptive.

Yes, that's what they were, are, and always will be—disrupters.

The Bilals, the Curtises, the Ahmeds, the Nana Sitis.

He is a part of many—you know Bilal—and still, he stands alone.

I honor him and feel all the rest in my bones.

Touched me deeply—the Sekous, the Shaheems, the Chokwes, the Nikkis.

And so many more who kicked down the door waving the .44, Who raised hell, who shook earth, who laid 'em down, who gave birth.

We are in the midst of revolution.

It is in us, around us, beside us.

It's here, right now, and you can recognize it by the ancestors among us.

These ones are mine. Not always through blood.

Bilal, through love. So many through love. That's the real glue.

Like those Amarus and Fulanis and Geronimos and Mutulus.

I got mine, y'all—my eyes of the tigers, the whirlwinds, the tornadoes, the storms.

Thank you, Bilal, for being a part of that for me,

For helping me see exactly where I'm going, where I want to be.

Ain't no turning back now. Ain't no giving up.

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around, and ain't nobody stopping us.

We got everything we need right here, all the time. Don't you see?

If you don't, maybe you need some ancestors like me.

Love you, Baba.

I'm looking for you in the whirlwind.

#### Your Son, Ishmael Muhammed

POP, AS I REFER TO HIM, WAS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF MAN...
HE WAS STRONG AND KNEW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE,
WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING A LISTENING EAR AND
VERY PATIENT AND SENSITIVE
TOWARD THE NEEDS OF OTHERS...AS I WATCHED HIM IN
HIS WEAKENED CONDITION, HE SHOWED GREAT STRENGTH
AS HE TRAVELED THE WORLD DOING WHATEVER HE
WISHED TO DO, AND GOING WHERE EVER HE WISHED TO
GO...MANY PEOPLE WOULD HAVE QUIT AFTER THE FIRST
HOSPITAL VISIT, BUT NOT POP...

HE SHOWED ME WHAT TRUE STRENGTH WAS, ALL THE WAY TO MY LAST TIME SEEING HIM...I WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF HELPING HIM GET DRESSED FOR VISITORS TO COME TO THE HOUSE. EVERY TIME I WOULD GO TO THE ROOM TO ASK IF HE WAS READY FOR ME TO ASSIST HIM IN GETTING DRESSED, HE WOULD SAY HE'S NOT READY YET...I WOULD ALWAYS SLIP MY HEAD IN THE DOOR WHILE ASKING.. AFTER THREE ATTEMPTS TO SEE IF HE WAS READY, I GO INTO THE ROOM. AND THIS GIANT OF A MAN THAT COULD NOT EVEN GET HIMSELF OUT OF THE BED TO SIT IN HIS CHAIR, HAD COMPLETELY DRESSED HIMSELF...I SEE THIS AS STRENGTH. NO MATTER HOW DOWN OR PHYSICALLY WEAK HE HAD BECOME, POP NEVER CEASED BEING A STRONG EXAMPLE OF WHAT MANHOOD LOOKS LIKE... NEVER QUIT, NEVER RETREAT, NO MATTER WHAT LIFE THROWS AT YOU...MAY THE MOST HIGH BLESS POP'S ESSENCE THROUGHOUT.

Your Son, Prince Kezz

# Words from the Grandchildren



"I may have lost you, pop, but your wisdom and love will guide me forever."

-Sayquan

"My favorite memory of pop was him asking my sister and I to play the same song on Michael Jackson: The Experience about 5 times so he could teach himself The Girl Is Mine on his sax. By the 5th time we weren't even focused on the game, just our grandfather's talent. Pop is and was the most talented man I know - and I think men are garbage."

-Autumn

"Dear Pop, I'm not sure what to say other than I'll miss you. Your snarky comments. Your random and consistent storytelling. Your quick remarks to my smart mouth. I'll miss the way you'd grab my head to lift me off the floor as a child. I'll miss your Facebook comments with musical emoji notes. I'll miss your not so terrible way of singing Furaha Kuzaliwa to me every year. I'll miss you calling me darling and granting me love after every phone call. I'll miss your large gap-toothed smile and booming laughter. I'll even miss the rides to the hospital just watching you stare out the window. I'll miss hearing the beautiful sounds you'd make come out of your saxophone and flute. I'll miss seeing your eyes light up when you talked about Iya. And most importantly, I'll just miss my first father. Pop you are and remain to be the most kindhearted, freedom fighting giant I've ever been blessed to witness. There's no one like you and I'm glad to be a piece of your legacy, your bloodline. Nakupenda always and forever, I'll catch you in the whirlwind..." -Tehura Ama

"Pop was a strong and unwavering presence in everyone's life—always there when needed, quiet yet passionate, especially when advocating for Black rights or playing his iconic saxophone. His music, whether solo or with Gil Scott-Heron & The Midnight Band, was revolutionary—just like him. He was an incredible father and a wonderful grandfather, always ready to support us. He was there for us. His impact will be felt for years to come, and his grounding energy and musical aura will be deeply missed. Love your Granddaughters."

-Jamiylah-El & Kamiylah-El

"My Poppy, over the past 10 years, Pop has been a constant presence in my life. From living with us (him and Iya), family gatherings, various events honoring him and his comrades and those not-so-random calls asking for my help with something tech-related. Right now, it's difficult to move forward without hearing his voice, seeing his smile, or giving him a hug and a kiss. It probably won't ever feel "normal," but I find comfort in knowing he was here.

At the end, I made sure to tell him I loved him. I told him, "I'll look for you in the whirlwind!"

And I have no doubt in my mind that's exactly where he resides now. Nakupenda Poppy. Forever

your Darlin' "
Ezenwanyi

"My pop presence was something very pure, he always bought a sense of peace and love to our family. i remember that one question with him would turn into a history lesson and as a child I would immediately get bored to the point where i forgot what my question was, but as an adult i appreciate those lessons because it prepared me for life in this world. pops legacy will always be a source of inspiration."

-Surah

"Peace pop. I want to thank you for every moment you spent intentionally giving your spirit to our people.

When I was younger, I didn't understand how important the discipline you displayed was. Now with the memories of us working together from music projects to vending crafts, I have a clearer vision of what you were doing. So, as I become a man, I'll carry the strong words, values & actions you displayed with me. Hug & Kiss Iya for me. We're grateful to carry on the mission with honor. Thank You. FTL ? Nakupenda."

-Khalfani Kojo Mgobozi"

"To the life of Sheikh Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali,
In a few words Bilal was known as a leader, a teacher, and a loving father. Bilal left an undeniable mark on this world in his wonderful time here. An original member of the Black
Panther Party, Bilal took part in the fight for the ideology of Black nationalism and socialism. Another crown on the beautiful life of Bilal was his music. As a masterful tenor saxophonist, he was able to bless the world with his remarkable talent. May his legacy forever live on through his wonderful music and his beautiful family. indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we return. To Baba, Rest in Power, and Peace. "
-Elijah, Dimene, Dekhari

"Pop was a symbol of power, and strength, and love. All of us grandchildren will continue to carry his love and legacy within us forever."

-Taivo

"Pops is a very kind, strong, and inspirational man. He put his heart and soul into everything he did, and I am blessed to have been his granddaughter."

-ShaRa



"Pops is a powerful community leader and an amazing revolutionary role model who inspired and empowered his people, and he is also my grandfather, who has taught me many important things and been very sweet to me and I love him for the type of spirit he is."

-Maa'T

"My poppy went through so many struggles in his life but he always made us smile. My poppy always cared about the details of our lives. My poppy

always asked. My poppy was one of my favorite men in the world for that simple reason, he ALWAYS asked. Whether it was "how you are doing darling?", "how's school fuzzy?", or in the jokes he'd make with or about us. My poppy was someone I admired and someone I was genuinely happy around. Bilal Sunni-Ali will always be 'my poppy'. With that I say nakupenda poppy you will always be the patriarch of my life. "

- Azekyah (FuzzyWuzzy)

"We loved each other very much and my favorite thing about pop was that he always gave me a big hug back when I hugged him."

-Free

"Pop, we have it from here, Nakupenda"

- Sol



I love the way Baba Bilal loved and honored his wife, the beautiful Iya Fulani. His unwavering love was truly special. His quiet kindness was felt in every warm hug and gentle smile, and I will always be grateful for the time I spent sitting with him, holding his hand. A month later, he returned to Allah. There is a sacred peace in being able to sit with a loved one in silence, knowing that love needs no words.

Baba Bilal was love, kindness, best husband to his Iya and the best father to his children. His presence was a gift to all who knew him. May his memory continue to shine through the love he shared and created thru his children.

With Love, Merlina Patterson

It is surreal to be writing to you, knowing that the vessel that carried you is now in the ground. I take comfort in knowing that you can still hear and perceive my words because just as the people named you, your SPIRIT is indomitable and everlasting. We accept the decree of our Lord.

There is not enough time and there are not enough words for me to express in this forum how much you have meant to me personally, as well as to my family. I still remember very clearly the first day that we really spoke, when you came to our family house in the West end across from the Masjid. Nuff said (smile).

I still remember very clearly the day that I visited you and Iya Fulani, and when we discovered some of our ancient connections in the way of family ties, how my relationship with you all and the blessings I received from your collective energy changed forever from great to wonderful. The fact that it was already great is a testament to your spirit.

I thank you for being such a loving and welcoming elder to this young man, wise and seasoned in your understanding yet so youthful and fresh in your stance. You never hesitated to offer correction where you found it necessary, and in the true spirit of wisdom, this correction did nothing but make us happy to be challenging ourselves to overcome contradictions and to rise to greater heights of self mastery.

I count it as a great blessing to have enjoyed many moments of profound silence in your presence, as well as receiving so many very practical jewels from you that can and have been applied in so many areas of my life, through conversation.

I salute you with deep respect and honor, and will carry you with me as I continue my portion of our people's relay race, till Victory. Please give my Mama, our beloved Iya Fulani, our profound regards.

I will certainly look for you both in the Whirlwind, and I look forward to our reunion in greater consciousness, at the Divinely appointed time.

Na kupenda Sana, Baba

#### Ras Kofi Abogunrin Kambon Kwayana

#### Poem for Our Warrior Soldier Brother Bilal Sunni-Ali Revolutionary Heaven II

Our Warrior Brother, Bilal Sunni-Ali has taken his righteous place amongst the ancestors. He entered the space on December 30, 2024, As he arrived, Brother Bilal noticed in awe they are all there dressed in celebratory African garments with royal colors of purple, gold, and some in all white.

However, some of the Soldiers, Alajo Adegbalola, Ahmed Obafemi and Chaka Fuller are dressed in full black Legionnaire uniform with brogan boots and leopard cloth embroidered into their caps and shoulder pads.

Warrior Brothers Mutulu Shakur and Sekou Odinga walks gallantly over to escort Bilal in. They all three walk and look like young soldiers with no semblance of pain or aging. Once again Bilal is united with his comrade-attorney.

Brother Chokwe Lumumba who rises from the table and offers Bilal a seat near him and his lovely wife Nubia Lumumba. As Bilal walks toward them, he notices a table of familiar faces, and he cannot contain his excitement:

Queen Mother Moore, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Robert, and Mabel Williams, ...wait there's more...Kwame Touré/Stokley Carmichael, Patrice Lumumba, and Jomo Kenyatta. Bilal stops, it is so much to take in. Bilal is feeling overwhelmed with love and gratitude when Brothers Gaidi and Imari Obadele are also approaching the festive table with Our beloved El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz!

As Bilal approached the table, he then saw the most amazing sight, his beautiful soulmate, lover, friend, and wife. Bilal and Fulani Sunni-Ali are once again reunited.

This must be Revolutionary Heaven, Bilal thought, as he engaged in an infinite embrace with his own Queen Fulani.

**Shushanna Shakur- Commemoration for Malcolm X Committee** 

The thing I'll always cherish the most in my time with Baba Bilal is the time he spent with me as a child. He always talked to me, engaged with me, and treated me as a young man, even when I was too young to understand how important that is. But I did appreciate it and I always felt that he was intentional in being attentive to me. It made me feel like I counted

As a budding musician myself, before I probably realized that's where my future would lead, I loved that he always kept music in our lives. He was always playing around on the flute. As young 8-year-old, I remember feeling so much pride seeing him on SNL playing with Gil-Scott Heron. His presence there on that stage reinforced that nothing was out of my reach.

When Mutulu came home and they got to see each other, free in the world, my heart swelled with joy. There was even a moment where Bilal, Sekou and my dear old dad, Mutulu, were together at my house at the same time. Words can hardly express the happiness I felt, seeing them together in this life was a dream I never spoke out loud, could hardly believe was happening and will never forget.

I will always remember him with the immeasurable love of a nephew who admires his caring, attentive, thoughtful, and loving uncle. I remain inspired by him and his immense talent and his way of moving through this world with humility, grace and so much love.

He was the holder, the blower, of the revolutionary winds. Straight ahead, Baba Bilal, I'll catch you in the whirlwind and we'll share some ginger wine.

Your Nephew, Mutulu "Mopreme" Shakur To the family of Bilal Sunni-Ali,

I am deeply saddened by the loss of our dear brother, Bilal Sunni-Ali, and I stand in solidarity with you as you grieve. My heart is heavy but filled with appreciation for having known our brother, Bilal.

I view our families as intertwined by a history of struggle for a just world beyond the yoke of racial capitalism, and I am so appreciative to Bilal for his unwavering support of my mother, Assata Shakur.

I want to thank brother Bilal and his family for never forgetting the incarcerated voices, the exiled voices, and the seeds of revolution that this government has tried unsuccessfully to drown. I want to thank brother Bilal for his denunciation of the illegal and unjust persecution of my mother, along with the broader community of revolutionaries who were similarly persecuted, brutalized, and incarcerated by the United States government.

Bilal was part of a community of beautiful people who yearned for an ethically grounded world, and his clamor for justice has not gone unheard. There are legions of us who still believe in humanity, in racial justice, in social justice, and in a world beyond the greed of capitalism.

We will forever remember the fervor of Bilal's revolutionary spirit, his musical genius, and his unwavering conviction to the liberation of Black people from systemic oppression.

In the spirit of love and struggle,

Kakuya Shakur

### My Last Living Giant Has Gone

To the love warrior,
He used his music to Inspire
to soothe to heal and to Encourage
His walk to lead to inspire and to Encourage
His staff to show Stability, Protection, and Strength
His smile ... That giant's smile gave us Love, Comfort and Courage
Your niece,

Sekyiwa Kai Shakur

To my beloved Uncle Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali, your contribution to the world will not be forgotten. You have impacted so many lives and your sacrifices were unwavering. The Shakur family salute you. Along with all those that had the pleasure to know you. We all Salutes you Baba. Enjoy your travels with the ancestors. I know you all are having fun.



-Talib Shakur

#### Salaam Uncle Bilal,

Affectionately known for many years as "Uncle Bilal, The revolutionary." I only knew the surface of your work. These past few years my knowledge of the work you have done and lives you have touched is amazing! May Allah be well pleased with your service, compassion, and dedication. While your physical presence will be missed, you remain with us forever through your example.

Love your Niece, Ericka and Great Nieces and Nephews Ameer, Bilal, Nadirah, Na'im, Najah and Asira

#### Uncle Bilal,

You were one of my best Uncles. You was always kind and protective of the kids. Bilal, The musician, the composer, the producer, the provider, the professor, the revolutionary, comrade to many but most of all the Patriarch of his family.

Pray I see you soon.

Love you Unc.

Jamala Lesane

Baba Bilal is a brother. There are many accolades that can be placed by his name. The best for me is Brother Bilal. The brother who did not hold his woman's creativity, knowledge, or her activism against her. The Brother who was not afraid to have a strong woman beside him knowing the family strength broadens even more. Some brothers considered Bilal was being under his woman's control. That is not so. They collaborated. They saw their visions and moved their visions forward for family and community. They did these things independently and together. Brother Bilal, I could talk to him and he

would listen. We might not always agree, but he would listen. I appreciate or apprecia-love the support you have given to me and to other sisters in the movement. I apprecia-love your standing strong, a living example of brotherly love. I know your spirit is still about the building of a better people and a better world. Your messages live on and your light shines. Ibae bayen tonu Baba Brother El-Hajj Bilal Sunni-Ali. As they say in Belize, "Rest in Peace, Rise in Glory."

I, Iya Kahina Ghafoor Shabazz, honor and respect you. Much love always. Free the Land

# Statement of the Imam Jamil Action Network on the Passing of Sheik Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali

Baba Bilal Sunni Ali was blessed with a life that was like a soundtrack for Black liberation, Black struggle, and Black love. His spirit was centered, grounded and rooted in love; love for the Creator, his people and all of humanity.

Baba Bilal is an example of revolutionary love in every aspect of his life: as a member of the BPP, BLA, Republic of New Afrika, Gil Scott Heron's Midnight Band, the Sunni-Ali-Obafemi family model that he and Fulani committed to and as Amir of Imam Jamil Action Network (IJAN).

Baba Bilal Sunni Ali became the Amir of IJAN in September of 2022. Being a member of the BPP and one of the co-defendants with Mutulu Shakur, Baba Bilal was the perfect fit to lead IJAN in advocating for the freedom of Imam Jamil Al-Amin from unjust incarceration. In fact, before IJAN, he and Masai Ehehosi were assigned and worked together on the International Committee for Free Imam Jamil.

There is so much that our organization has accomplished and learned under Baba Bilal.

He initially established a Video Orientation for new members documenting different aspects of Imam Jamil's life, which included Wendell Parish from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Felipe Luciano of the Young Lords, Dhoruba bin Wahad and others. Led an IJAN unit at the Southern Human Rights Organizers Conference - Jackson, MS - Dec. 2016, Organized the Re-Learning H. Rap Brown Symposium October 2019 - Atlanta. Paired with Muslim Alliance of North America Bring Back Rap webinar with MANA and Imam's family, He spearheaded Community Under Siege weekend intensive-March 2021 - Washington, DC, Anchored Monthly Vigils outside Fulton County DA's Office, This was in addition to various radio programs, webinars.

He supported the development of the Expose COINTELPRO & Beyond Coalition, while anchoring the Black Belt Human Rights Coalition/ Compilation of documentation of Imam Jamil & other political prisoners for United Nations Decade for People of African Descent.

One of the most important things that he did as our leader was to give us structure. He oversaw the expansion of IJAN from a close collective to a network, building upon the 2022 Freedom Fighters Film Festival across 6 Southern sites. This included beginning to re-establish ties in Lowndes County, Alabama and our participation in the Selma Jubilee Bridge Crossing events for the last 4 years. He was a lead organizer for a petition delivery to the Fulton County Conviction Integrity Unit on October 4th 2021, a vigil to free Imam Jamil in Atlanta in September of 2021, and represented IJAN in Black August events.

Under Baba Bilal's leadership IJAN hosted a Day Of Action in honor of Imam Jamil's 80th birthday, October 4th 2023 in West End Park.

His lifetime of commitment to struggle benefited us most because he brought a treasure trove of knowledge of practical application of Islam as a means to engage in revolutionary struggle. This was always grounded in deep love for Allah and his people. We pledge to carry it on.

March 23, 2025 Special Memorial Issue

#### **BISMIALLAH**

#### KEYS: LOVE, GRATEFULNESS, OPPORTUNITY, COMFORT, HEALING, & CONNECTION

Gratefulness is what I want to express for the blessing of Bilal, Spirit, my brother. Spirit truly used his gifts to share love, open opportunity for people, to comfort people, to heal people, and so much more. With literally a lifetime of experiences with Spirit, what shines bright for me, is how he shared love and his life as a freedom fighter. I remember his musical presentations and how he would say to me, come on the stage and dance. I remember his many trips to Belize, and him saying to me, come on with me and dance, connect, and educate. I remember when he was working with a group of people on the decade for people of African Descent and him saying to me, come join us and help lead the health conversations. I remember him stopping by my house, unannounced, in the low country on his many travels, and him calling to say to me, I'll be there in about 15 minutes. I remember him gently waking me for Fajr prayer every morning whenever I was at he and my Sister Iyalosha Fulani Sunni-Ali's home and, oh ves. I remember how he loved my sister out loud and in a way that I haven't seen anywhere else! Spirit's presence in my life has always been one

that held the door open so I could get in, and one that connected me with whoever could help me to accomplish what I was called here to do! Spirit—Bilal Sunni-Ali connected me with literally hundreds of people throughout the globe with his true desire to help me to accomplish what I was called here to do!

There comes a time in life when you know to surround yourself with people who make you laugh, people who add value to your journey, people who truly share love with you, people who treat you well, people who pray with and for you, and with people who got you. Spirit—Bilal Sunni-Ali, my brother is and has always been this for me. I will miss you, especially your laughter. I express gratefulness Spirit for encouraging and inspiring me, Gratefulness Spirit for reasoning with me and talking through possibilities with me. Gratefulness Spirit for opening the doors of opportunity for me to make sure I got in. Gratefulness Spirit for opening your heart to the ideas that I have had over the years. And most of all Spirit, I say, gratefulness for your dedication, sacrifice, contributions and for showing, the way you did, the fullness of real and how to do it!

Your Sister Always, Qasimah Olabumi Tamu Ayo Adegbalola

#### Baba,

To be able to share space and time with a Giant is one thing. I've been blessed to have had a plethora of opportunities to sit with those who are or reference themselves as such.

None like Baba. I have been absolutely blessed to have sat, laughed, sang, broke bread, laughed, learned from, organized with, and laughed some more with a brother, a man, who has paved ways, led mine and showed me how to do both.

What an energy, a light, a Spirit a guide. He is who remarkable looked like and gave wonder purpose!

His essence so easy, a demeanor filled with love and great expectations that were full of his delightful support and his ability to have already recognized the silver lining with a selflessness to point it out to you.

Thank you for always answering. For all the texts. For sharing Mama Fulani and your children with me. Thank you for showing me how to show up in the world and why it's important to always show up as me. Thank you for considering me as one of your "daughters". Thank you for every time I heard you say Tu or Tuere in the same tone leaving me to wonder if I was really in trouble or not and even if I was, you led with love. Thank you for always being you and never wavering from the thought, loving, brilliant, strong, present, purposeful being you will always be in my life and in this world.

Forever I will be Freeing The Land and teaching others to do the same until the wind has whirled no more .

#### **Sister Tuere**

Dear Uncle Bilal,

As my uncle, you have been an extraordinary presence in my life, one that I will always treasure. Your influence as a man of integrity, kindness, and strength has been a shining example of what it means to be a true man and qualities I should look for in a man.

Watching you, I've witnessed what real love looks like — the kind that is patient, kind, and deeply devoted. Your love for Auntie Fulani is a testament to your character, and I've learned so much just from seeing how you cared with such tenderness, respect, and commitment. You have shown me that love is not just a feeling but a continuous action that requires effort, understanding, and respect.

As a Muslim, you're a model of devotion — not only to your faith but also to your family. Your unwavering commitment to both is something I admire deeply. You have shown me how to live with purpose, how to serve others with sincerity, and how to remain humble in everything.

And beyond all of that, your words of motivation and each joke you've shared have helped shape me into the person I am today. Every piece of advice, every laugh, and every story has prepared me for whatever life may bring. Your ways made sure I knew how to face challenges with strength, grace, and a positive attitude.

Thank you, Uncle Bilal, for being the guiding force you've been in my life. I am truly blessed to have you as my uncle, and I will always cherish the lessons you have taught me. You have shown me the true meaning of love, devotion, and faith, and I am forever grateful for that.

With love and appreciation,

#### **Ami & Family**

# NAPO/MXGM Statement on the Transition of Comrade Bilal Sunni-Ali



The entire family of NAPO/ MXGM salutes the life and contributions of Amir Baba Bilal Sunni Ali – a legendary New Afrikan Freedom Fighter. Baba Bilal's role as an organizer, artist, soldier, teacher, and community father is well known throughout the New Afrikan Independence, Pan-Afrikanist, and anti-imperialist movements inside the u.s. empire, and throughout the Afrikan world.

Baba Bilal was a "big Brother" and comrade to the founders of the New Afrikan People's Organization. We met Baba Bilal in the early 1970s through his work with Dr. Mutulu Shakur and Mama Yuri Kochiyama, and through their work with the National Committee to Defend Political Prisoners (NCDPP), and their newsletter *Take the Land!* The title of the newsletter made it clear their commitment to national liberation www.rebuildcollective.org

and armed resistance We soon learned Baba Bilal was previously a founder and kev organizer of the Black Panther Party for Selfdefense in New York City. The NCDPP established itself to support and provide legal defense of numerous political prisoners and

prisoners of war from the COINTELPRO war on the Black Power movement. Some of the founders of our organization also previously worked with Baba Bilal when he joined the Afrikan People's Party (APP) in the mid-1970s and became a member of the organization's Central Committee.

Baba Bilal would always greet comrades with the demeanor of a gentle giant. You felt his love for our people and for humanity. He listened carefully and patiently, and taught all who were receptive. When time to challenge oppression, injustice, and falsehood, Bilal was intense, focused, and determined.

We were deeply proud of Baba Bilal's role as performer and composer for the Midnight Night Band, led by Gil Scott Heron and Brian Jackson. Known as "the Spirit" of the Midnight Band, Bilal played tenor saxophone, flute, and harmonica, as well as composed powerful songs like "Liberation Song (Red, Black, and Green) on the album First Minute of a New Day and "Essex" (dedicated to Black guerilla Mark Essex) on From South Africa to South Carolina. The name "Spirit" was certainly appropriate as he personified the life of a New Afrikan Muslim.

The Midnight Band was critical in promoting a revolutionary spirit in a time when many comrades where in captivity and in exile. Its music inspired and fueled the thoughts and actions of our movement and other liberation activists throughout the empire during the 1970s and early 80s. As an artist, Baba Bilal composed the music for a theatrical performance titled *Look for Me in the Whirlwind*, written by Amiri Baraka and Baba Askia Ture, which depicted the captivity and liberation of Assata Shakur.

His marriage to Provisional Government of the Republic (PGRNA) of New Afrikan leader Iya Fulani Adegbalola was celebrated throughout our movement, uniting two well respected freedom fighters. Together they built a household that represented our organization's slogan "the New Afrikan family is a unit of struggle." True to the commitment to "free the land", Iya Fulani and Baba Bilal moved their household to New Orleans to organize and coordinate with other New Afrikans in the national territory. The Sunni-Ali household worked to contribute to national liberation through the arts, healthcare, defense, youth,

education, media, and spiritual development. Their home in New Orleans, and ultimately Atlanta, was a New Afrikan center for healing and empowerment. Both Baba Bilal and Iya Fulani "stood tall" as the targets of the u.s. government in the early 1980s during the "Brink's" expropriation (so-called RICO) case. After captivity, going underground, and seeking refuge in Belize, both were exonerated of any charges. Iya Fulani specifically refused to collaborate with a federal grand jury and was held captive due to her stance. With our founding chairman Baba Chokwe Lumumba serving as his advocate, Baba Bilal was acquitted of charges.

He continued to fight for the freedom of political prisoners and prisoners of war. One highlight of his activism was the leadership he provided in organizing resistance to the terrorist invasion of the West End Islamic community during the evening of the search for Imam Jamil Al-Amin. Imam Jamil was falsely accused of killing a Fulton County (Georgia) Deputy Sheriff, and wounding another. This incident led to police raiding the Imam's community. Baba Bilal mobilized forces to resist the increased occupation and would continue fighting for Imam Jamil's release until his (Baba Bilal's) last days living on Earth.

Baba Bilal was also a critical thinker and teacher in our movement. He was a reservoir of New Afrikan history, and a visionary of what liberation looked like. True to his status as a Sheikh (or scholar), Baba Bilal

instructed and provided consul to movement veterans but also provided foundations of New Afrikan political science to those recently introduced to revolutionary ideology.

We would be remiss if not noting Baba Bilal as a Pan-Afrikanist. His appointment as an official of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and his proud acknowledgement of his Garifuna lineage also reflect his commitment and identification with the world Afrikan civilization. He certainly believed in liberation for Afrikan people on the continent and around the planet. Baba Bilal was committed to the liberation of humanity around the globe.

Our condolences to the Sunni-Ali family. We salute your lineage and contribution that your Ancestors and you have, and our making to our struggle. We pray for your continued health, and contribution in honor of your valiant Ancestors. We are certain Baba Bilal is playing his saxophone, flute, and harmonica, as Iya Fulani and Baba Ahmed are singing music to inspire the Ancestors and serenading and inspiring us in our dreams. Let us stay tuned and listen for them in the Whirlwind!

One Love A Family is a unit of struggle Free the land

New Afrikan People's Organization/ Malcolm X Grassroots Movement





Giving perfect praises to Allah and Honoring Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali warrior-soldier whose every breath is spent in the love and liberation of our people, sacrificing every breath of life on this earth realm. It an honor that Allah bonded us in this life cycle to be on the battlefield fighting/straggling side by side having each other back in defense against all those who are enemy against the liberation of our people much salute to Baba Bilal Sunni Ali you cannot kill the spirit we will look for him in the whirlwind along with all those warriors who traveled to the higher plane of life.

Brother/Comrade

Chui Ferguson-El



# WRFG Solidarity Statement for Sheikh Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali

With profound reverence and gratitude, we honor the life, legacy, and revolutionary spirit of Sheikh Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali—a long-time comrade, elder, freedom fighter, political activist, cultural warrior, and steadfast beacon of liberation. His presence was a force of unwavering commitment, not only in the struggle for justice but in the preservation of truth through music, media, and grassroots activism.

Sheikh Baba Bilal was more than an activist—he was a sonic

architect of resistance, wielding his saxophone as a weapon of liberation alongside Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson in the legendary Midnight Band, where his artistry amplified the urgency of Black struggle and global solidarity. Yet, beyond the music, he was a teacher, mentor, and guide, bringing his revolutionary fervor into the world of community radio.

I knew of him and his music long before I ever met him—when I was an avid connoisseur of Gil Scott-Heron and Brian Jackson's music in New York City. Back then, I stood as "security" at local venues where they performed, fully immersed in the political lyrical poetry that Baba Bilal himself

penned—songs like *Western Sunrise*, *Essex*, and *Guerrilla*, which became the musical score for my own life. These compositions were not just music; they were messages of resistance and truth, pieces of revolutionary scripture written by Baba Bilal himself, capturing the pulse of the times and the soul of the struggle.

Another song in particular penned by Sheikh Baba Bilal, "Liberation Song (Red, Black & Green)", became more than just an anthem of freedom—it became a powerful tool in his own fight against political persecution. The U.S. government, in its ongoing suppression of Black liberation movements, falsely accused Baba Bilal of a fabricated crime in an attempt to silence his revolutionary voice. However, the truth prevailed, and the very song he created—

one that called for unity, justice, and self-determination—helped exonerate him, ultimately proving his innocence and exposing the state's calculated efforts to criminalize those who dared to resist. This stands as a testament to the undeniable power of music as both a weapon and a shield in the battle for justice.

At WRFG 89.3 FM, he co-anchored one of the longest-running public affairs shows still on the air today. His voice, sharp as ever, resonated across the airwaves, keeping the fire of activism alive in a

time when progressive voices remain under attack. He was a pillar of this station, a steadfast presence, and a cultivator of new generations of media warriors. As a shepherd of truth, he left behind a legacy, entrusting those who remain with the responsibility of keeping *What Good Is a Song/Friday Night Drum* a vital force of inspiration, empowerment, and enlightenment on our airwayes.

His impact extended beyond the microphone. Sheikh Baba Bilal arranged a historic interview with Gil Scott-Heron on April 1st—Gil's birthday—an honor that few received. That interview was not something easily granted, but it was Baba Bilal, as the "Spirit" of the Midnight Band—aptly named by Gil—who made it



happen.

We later shared this historic interview on MAPPTIME Jazz, the program where Gil himself provided a promotional drop for the show—an emblem of the deep respect and connection shared. That interview, co-conducted by Baba Bilal and myself, became a profound retrospective of Gil's life and early upbringing. It highlighted the immense respect and admiration Gil had for Bilal, whom he called "Spirit." This interview would later become an essential part of Gil's estate, valued by his son, whom Gil personally introduced to me. For me, it was the interview of a lifetime, a rare and profound honor to document such history alongside those who lived it.

But to speak of Sheikh Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali without mentioning Iyalosa Fulani Sunni-Ali, who was also present for the interview, would be to tell only half the story. Together, they stood on the front lines of the battlefield for justice and self-determination, bearing the brunt of persecution and castigation—just as so many of our political prisoners who still languish in the dungeons for daring to demand socio-economic and political justice. Their bond was forged in activism, musicianship, and cultural stewardship. Both fearless in their commitment, they dedicated their lives to challenging oppressive systems and building foundations for collective liberation. She preceded him in transition, but their interwoven legacies and unshakable devotion to truth, justice, and spiritual elevation remain inseparable.

Our connection was deeper than just the physical realm. We both incarnated in the Olmec Nuwbun archetype of the Galactic Worldbridger, which further solidified our kindred souls and spirits. It was a bond that transcended time, a cosmic alignment that reaffirmed our purpose as messengers, connectors, and warriors of truth. As such, we always greeted one another with the affectionate "How's Myself?", a recognition of our mirrored cosmic mission. He often spoke fondly of his home residency in Belize, where he shared a deep and revered relationship with the Indigenous people of the land. He frequently reflected on how his time there reminded him of his Garifuna lineage and roots, how he felt welcomed, at peace, and right at home among the native people. For him, Belize was not just a place—it was a spiritual return to a way of being, a reaffirmation of the cultural and ancestral ties that anchored his soul

No matter the struggle, he always carried a keen sense of humor, delivering a hearty laugh at his own wit, even in the face of the oppressive conditions that persist. His ability to find joy, to uplift others with laughter while standing in the fire of resistance, was a testament to his strength of spirit and unwavering resolve.

I am deeply humbled to have shared in Sheikh Baba Bilal's journey, not just as a comrade in the struggle, but as someone who he nurtured, guided, and cultivated in my role as Operations Director at WRFG. His wisdom was boundless, his patience instructive, and his unwavering belief in the power of media as a tool for liberation was something he instilled in me from day one.

One of the many things he remained steadfast about was the completion of his book—a work he saw as an extension of his lifelong mission. He often spoke of Amiri Baraka, reflecting on how Baraka's dedication to revolutionary thought and action inspired him to press forward in his own writing. His words, like his music

and activism, were a weapon of truth, and he was determined to leave behind a legacy that future generations could build upon. As I embarked on my two-hour journey back from my last visit with him, it was a bittersweet return to a world we once shared—where *Aluta Continua*, the struggle continues, and the work for freedom, justice, and equality remains imminent. But just as surely as the struggle persists, so too does the certainty of victory.

On behalf of WRFG, its BOARD, Staff, and Volunteers, we stand in unwavering solidarity with the Sunni-Ali family to continue the work of both Sheikh Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali and Iyalosa Fulani Sunni-Ali. Their mission is our mission, and their legacy shall remain a guiding force in the ongoing struggle for truth, justice, and liberation.

Rest in Power, KING. Your legacy will never be silenced. In Solidarity,

Director of Operations & Facilities Coordinator WRFG ATLANTA 89.3 FM Office 404 523 8181 / Cell 404 447 4087





#### 23 MARCH 2025

#### Comrades/ Ndugus,

Today, we honor the life and legacy of Black Liberation Movement Veteran, Bilal Sunni Ali. A dedicated freedom fighter and servant of Allah. Sheikh Bilal Sunni Ali exemplified courage, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to Afrikan people. His contributions to the Black Panther Party, Black Liberation Army (BLA), Imam Jamil Action Network, and the broader struggle for Black liberation are immeasurable.

Bilal Sunni Ali was a true Jagun Jagun "Warrior's Warrior' who stood on the front lines, advocating for justice, challenging systemic oppression, and working tirelessly to uplift our community. Beyond his movement work, Bilal Sunni Ali touched countless lives through his leadership, guidance, and profound belief in the power of a united front.

Bilal Sunni Ali was a revolutionary father to many of us in The FTP Movement. His spirit, dedication, and the impact he made will continue to inspire generations to fight for liberation and build a People's Army. We remember his sacrifices, celebrate his achievements, and vow to carry forward the torch. The name Bilal Sunni Ali will forever be etched in the annals of Black revolution and decolonization.

Kalorji Jama Charga FTP Movement and Black Power Media

# Comrade Bilal Sunni-Ali: Revolutionary Freedom Fighter, Revolutionary Leader, Revolutionary Musician and Beautiful Human Being

by Susan Rosenberg

Bilal is someone that I had the honor of knowing over the past 45 years. I met him at the Black Acupuncture Association of North America (BAANA) clinic in Harlem in 1980. I met him again in 1985 at the Manhattan Correctional Center in NYC while we were both incarcerated for revolutionary actions to Free The Land, and for Black Liberation.

Being at MCC at that time when the jail was filled with revolutionaries from the New African national struggle, from the Puerto Rican Independence movement, and the anti-imperialist north American movement was a brilliant experience where everyone was able to exchange ideas and strategies and ways to continue to resist even as we were all repressed and locked down. Bilal, Chokwe Lumumba, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Sekou Odinga, Marilyn Buck, Silvia Baraldini and all the others there, well, the conversations were beyond meaningful. Bilal was acquitted and I was dropped from the case. I had already been sentenced to 60 years.

After prison I was able to listen to the music that Bilal played and recorded. He exquisitely blended his world view with his music. So beautiful.

All through these years I have felt Bilal's leadership whether it has been about Dr. Shakur and the epic battle to get him released. Or about Imam Jamil al Amin and struggle for his release, or about all the political prisoners still being held. At Dr. Mutulu Shakur's memorial Bilal's spirit enveloped and calmed me and enabled me to feel the joy, in recognizing Mutulu's glorious life and he helped me get past only grief. Bilal brought that spirit everywhere he went. I know that his light and work and beautiful family will continue to inspire and forever carry on.

Baba Bilal Sunni-Ali Presenté.

Free The Land

Love and solidarity, susan rosenberg

# Statement from Black Acupuncture Association of North America (BAAANA)

Black Acupuncture Association of North America (BAAANA) We the board members of BAAANA, revolutionary nationalist movement and the international anti-imperialist movement has lost a staunch comrade recently, Baba Bilal Sunni Ali. Our political friendship goes back to the days of Lincoln Hospital where liberation medicine was instituted to address the plague of drug addiction by applying auricular acupuncture.

As BAAANA board members, Baba Bilal with his political affiliations with groups like Jericho and individual support committees like Iman Jamil Al Amin, he never failed to keep us updated with news of political prisoners, whether in or out.

Baba Bilal also shared a prayer that we would recite before and ending our board meetings that came out of Gil Scott Heron and the Midnight band and it goes like this. "Now more than ever, all the families must be together. Every brother and sister, everywhere, feels the time is in the air.

Common blood flows through common veins, and the common eye all sees the same.

Now more than ever, all the families must be together." Baba Bilal SunniAli will be dearly missed for his political insight, knowledge and experience!

Catch you in the heavenly whirl wind!

FREE THE LAND!

FREE EM ALL!

#### To the Sunni-Ali Family and Community,

The Kanyama Family sends our deepest love and light to you in this time of transition. While we stand firm in the faith that Brother/Uncle/Baba Bilal's immense contributions—his bountiful family legacy, political impact, and artistic influence—are forever set in stone, we also acknowledge the weight of this moment as we adjust to life without his physical presence.

Sheikha (*Brother/Uncle/Baba*) Bilal Sunni - Ali had as a boundless type of love, a guiding force that nurtured his beloved wife, children, grandchildren, as well as the extended family and community. We know it will continue to cover us. Even in his transition, his silent strength provides calm, security, and wisdom for so many, anchoring us in times of uncertainty. It is because of Baba's like him that we who are blessed and honored to have walked and talked with him continue to march on in strength, love, and resilience. His spirit lives on in all of us, a testament to a life well-lived and love well-given.

In unity and remembrance,

The Kanyama Family





# Baba Bilal Sunni Ali

WHEREAS, Let the record reflect that with the acknowledgment of the transition of Bilal Sunni Ali. The Central Committee as well as the Rank and File of the Black Panther Party Cubs extend solid sentiments of Revolutionary love, respect, and appreciations for the commitment and contributions of our Comrade.

WHEREAS, Baba Bilal Sunni Ali's legacy has impacted countless arenas. With a profound impact upon our people. Our movement, our music, the masses in general. All have felt the beat of Baba Bilal in one way or another.

Be It Further Resolved that Baba Bilal along with his Soulmate Mama Fulani, whom literally represented labor and love, who balanced out love and war stories. They, gifting us generations of unapologetically Africans, made Family and Love for Freedom sound like a synchronized symphony beat. And provided our people with an example of a couple fighting for Black Power!

Let The Record Reflect that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Family.

Humbly submitted on the 1st of March 2025.

At present Accra, Ghana.

Chairman Dr. Fred Hampton Jr., The Black Panther Party Cubs







### I'll Reach For You...

I know more about Baba Bilal thru his daughter's eyes (my best friend Aiyisha) and through his music, I learned that the whirlwind he spoke of was not just metaphor—it was the reality of Black existence in America. Yet, Baba Bilal showed us how to remain centered when everythingaround us spins out of control.

"War is never easy," he reminded us. And indeed, the war for dignity and equality has created distances between loved ones, has caused weariness in our bones. But in those moments when

fatigue threatened to overwhelm me, I am reminded of his words: "Look for me in the whirlwind."

I think of how Baba Bilal never compromised his truth. How his art was both shield and sword. His children carry his legacy forward with the same unwavering commitment. Through them, his teachings continue to reach those of us hungry for what he could teach. They are the living embodiment of his message, proving that even after physical absence, one's impact can continue to grow and nurture new generations.

So when I hear "Look for me in the whirlwind," I understand it as more than just beautiful words. I hear it as a whisper.... a promise that connection transcends separation. It is a reminder that in the midst of chaos, we can still find each other. It is an assurance that even when the storm seems overwhelming, we are never truly alone. I reach back for you... we reach back for you... And in reaching, we honor what's true.

**Stephanie McKee-Anderson** 

#### Bilal Sunni-Ali- A Tribute to the "Spirit" of the Midnight Band

Written by @Pat Kelly

Bilal Sunni-Ali, our friend/brother known as the 'Spirit' of the

Midnight Band, was also a husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

We remember Bilal as a fearless activist/musician who wrote positive messages during the Black liberation movement of the seventies.

In 1975 Bilal wrote and recorded, "Western Sunrise," on the album, First Minute of a New Day (Arista). The same year, "Essex" was recorded on: From South Africa to South

**Carolina (Arista).** These compositions showcased Bilal's interpretations and influence of John Coltrane through impeccable saxophone solos.

A Black liberation soldier who mastered sax, and flute.

A few lyrics from *Essex* illustrates a gentle heart, spiritual vision and commitment to the liberation of our people.

Essex, Part 1

Let me see what life can bring

Let me see a further thing.

Let me see the KINGS of OLD recrown themselves.

We love, and miss you

Peace go with you, brother...

### **Thoughts about Uncle Bilal**

When I think of Uncle Bilal, I go back to my childhood in San Francisco, when he was part of Gil Scott-Heron's group. He used to stay with us often when he was in town, and I always looked forward to seeing him. He was a gentle giant—his great smile and kind spirit made his presence something I truly cherished.

As life took us in different directions, one thing never changed—whenever we saw each other, he always showed me love. His gental but STONG spirit, and his unwavering presence are things I'll dearly miss.

Beyond what he meant to me personally, I deeply appreciate his contributions to our culture. Through his music, he helped shape a sound and a message that resonated far beyond his time. His artistry, his passion, and his dedication to his craft and his people left a lasting impact, and I honor him for that.

Love Always,

Ayesha Jabbar Crenshaw

#### Excerpts from

# PGRNA Reflections: as seen through the eyes of a New Afrikan, Muslim, Garveyite and Panther

(the full text is available at rebuildcollective.org under "resources")

by

**Bilal Sunni-Ali** 

At the historic New Afrikan Nation Day commemorating fifty years of existence of the PGRNA (Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika) held in Detroit in March of this year 2018, several of us were invited to participate in a session titled, "Elders Reflections". Here are some of my remarks....

I seek refuge in Allah against misleading and against being mislead into ignorance and oppression by others. And the worst oppression is self oppression. That which we allow to happen to ourselves and I ask Allah to guide my heart and my tongue in whatever I am caused to express in these reflections.

In the spring of 1968 I was already organizing the Bronx-Harlem chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. I had been and still am a Garveyite from birth. I was then and still am now a practicing Muslim. At that time not fully understanding what was meant by protracted struggle I was one of those youth that used the slogan "free by '73".

Myself and several others in Harlem at the time were anxious to know the outcome of this Black Power Conference and the founding of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika. This was the period of mass urban rebellions. There were a series of Black Power Conferences that created five to twenty-five year plans of policy development for the movement. The Black Power movement at that point was clearly a movement for self-determination. Direction for that movement was being established by the Black Power Conferences.

In 1968 there were two Black Power Conferences; one in Detroit, in March, at which the Provisional Government of the RNA (Republic of New Afrika) was founded. In August 1968, a BPC was held in Philadelphia, at which time the Afrikan People's Party (APP) was founded.

We had in Harlem, at that time, the Harlem People's Parliament; a body of leaders appointed or elected, that were concerned with establishing policy on how conditions of life could be affected through the actions of Harlemites independently. The Parliament accepted direction from the BPC's.

Members of Parliament had relationships with newly independent countries and forces struggling for independence in Africa and the Caribbean.

Within a few years the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood (MIB) was established with Sheik Ahmed K. Tawfiq as the Imam. Imam Talib Abdur Rahman succeeded him and is still presently the Imam. There was the common reference to both Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn as "People's Republics" the People's Republic of Harlem and the People's Republic of Bed-Stuy. So there was a conscious body of politics that was operating in those areas that was separate from the conventional body of electoral politics that governed the overall society.

Along with this independent political and social development there was a growing understanding that returning south was key to our national survival and development. Going south meant organizers with independent black political thought, over half of which was born in south would return to the southern part of the United States where many Africans had been held in bondage and where segregation was still the rule of law. Many were themselves escapees or children of escapees of white terrorist lawlessness in the south.

Our esteemed ancestor Queen Mother Audley Moore-El, from New Iberia, LOUISIANA, is a classic example of an activist within this body of thinking and action. She was one of the first, if not the very first signer of the New Afrikan DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. She is the person from whom i first heard the name New Afrika used as the name of our nation.

The New Afrikan people were so defined to distinguish us culturally as well as

ideologically from the terms "Afro-American" and/or "African-American". These were the two most progressive popular terms to define us during that period.

The term "American" had been used by the colonial usurpers of the Western Hemisphere in their intent to transform the entire hemisphere into one white country. Disregarding the indigenous name "Turtle Island" they used the term America chauvinistically to refer to the expansion of their efforts in the "americas". Afro and/or African-American began to mean Africans born in the United States of America rather than Africans born in the Western Hemisphere. After the War of 1812 Mexico and Canada although considered part of North America were not part of "America". So the term New Afrika was clearly to distinguish us as a people and our territory from the white chauvinist reference to America.

I actually got involved with an RNA study group while serving time as a political prisoner in Soledad, California 1969 through 1972.

To captured and imprisoned urban guerrillas, Robert F. Williams being chosen as President in exile and H. Rap Brown was chosen as Minister of Defense were big pluses.

Robert Williams had a broad following of adherents to armed struggle. He circulated a newsletter, the Crusader, which contained his pronouncements on armed struggle based on the activity of himself and other comrades of his in the U.S. armed services, along with what he learned from the experience of other combatants while in exile in Cuba, Korea, Africa and China.

H. Rap Brown had emerged as a spokesperson for the youth. In his emerging as chairman of SNCC, he had been involved in advocating and providing armed defense for those involved in voter registration as well as building bases of Black Power in Alabama

and Mississippi. He was part of the delegation to the 1964 Democratic Convention at which the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party sought to unseat the Delegation of the white Democrats of Mississippi. That was a turning point in electoral politics towards black independent politics and towards Black Independence.

These two men were drawing cards to the RNA, not just because they were popular, but for what they were popular for. They both had reputations for being brave, disciplined and dedicated to struggle and movement.

There was mass acceptance and support of their being in exile (Robert Williams) and being underground (H. Rap Brown).

The other attraction to urban guerrillas under lockdown was that the RNA had been involved in shooting incidents in which the only casualties were the enemies. The attack on the government at the first anniversary of the founding at New Bethel in Detroit (Aretha Franklin's father's church). Then they won their court battles. Everyone arrested was released and then the two brothers arrested at the scene of the incident Chaka Fuller and Raphael were tried and acquitted. Then came the RNA eleven incident in which again no casualties except the enemies.

When I was released from Soledad and returned to New York some of the people that I personally worked with mostly Panthers were also RNA citizens. In fact there were joint ministries of information, defense, and the development of the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners, which was worked on by Panthers, RNA government workers and a host of other para-military groups whose work was resulting in swelling numbers of political prisoners and prisoners of war. I took the oath in Brooklyn in February '72. I joined the New York Consulate as a work study cadre. We had to study, do work study and physical/military training. Every citizen had to.

The "going south" program of the movement began to have structure within the PG-RNA based on your progress with study, work study and training. The biggest difference I see going on today is the lack of this work, study and training.

We had a book called the Government Administration Handbook. The GAH outlined how a PG-RNA local unit was to be organized. Each PG-RNA unit was an administrative unit - local president, secretary, treasurer and government workers in housing, education, healthcare, food, youth, culture, prisoner support. In fact, each unit had a person leading and reporting on RNA 11 support activity.

We have people who say they remember this being the case but the only copies of the Government Administration Handbook existing are copies where this crucial information has been deleted.

Nation-building courses were developed for citizens of record to become government workers. The nation-building course was designed to study history, history of struggle, the current struggle including study of current leadership. The other important thing was that everybody had to study self defense techniques as well as weapons/firearms safety, weapon maintenance and target practice. Each unit of government workers engaged a weekly collective study process.

Under this system of organizing and using this process of recruitment, every potential government worker cadre was grounded in mass work and had a level of training that each other could rely on. The trust level between cadres was raised to a higher level. This relationship of training and trust amongst the government worker cadres translated to greater levels of trust in and for the PG-RNA by the public; that "trust" was based largely on our being able to respond with predictable behavior.

The character of the local units and its leadership was qualitatively different from what it is now. Likewise the character and quality of regional and national ministries was much different. Local, regional and national ministries were made up of cadres disciplined by training, grounded in history and mass struggle, guided the work through local, regional and national conferences through which the ministries reported and interacted.

The ministries guided and tracked our work. Nation building was focused on two fronts: 1. Engage in struggle against the state to force the state to provide services and opportunities for our people's welfare. 2. The building of independent alternative institutions that develop our people's capacity to govern themselves.

This process was designed to engage people in actively challenging the state and to

engage our people in institutional development in areas of self-determination.

Through this process we saw the process of liberation. Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city, state by state, region by region, family by family, gang by gang, association by association winning the hearts minds and allegiance of our people.

This painstaking process was abandoned for a legal concept of liberation which says that this work of engaging our people in the revolutionary process of liberation can be substituted by engaging our people in holding a plebiscite to transfer power from the oppressor state to the people by vote.

This was actually a change of direction called for by Imari Obadele in the second edition of "War In America".

Without proper study the role of the plebiscite is grossly misunderstood. And it needs to be understood that a plebiscite is to determine the will and level of readiness of the people to be self governed. It is not done to transfer power.

This erroneous counter revolutionary concept gives people false hope of easy victory.

To prepare for a plebiscite is not merely to define the word "plebiscite" and hand people a ballot or tell them to go vote online. To prepare for a plebiscite is to engage the people in the revolutionary process of liberation so that they can have the experience that gives them the confidence to vote to be self governed. It is to be re-engaged in the work of voter education, this kind of voter education is one that clarifies to our people the difference between inclusion/assimilation and self determination.

#### There is no easy way to gain our liberation.

This erroneous concept gave rise to an even more erroneous concept; that revolutionary leadership could be selected through the popular vote. But the first erroneous concept, the one that paved the way for the others to be accepted, was the idea that we did not need a process of education that included a training program to even out our development and allow us to assess our own and each others' strengths and weaknesses.

At one point we were creating local units centered through study of history, disciplined by training, grounded in community service work. Without this process of recruitment and training the local units ceased to exist, followed by ministries ceasing to exist.

The PCC, which was at one time a body of disciplined cadre, selected by disciplined cadre, from disciplined cadre, disintegrated into a group of individuals who had no grounding in history, nor in mass work/community service; not having a clue as to what a PEOPLES CENTER COUNCIL was supposed to do.

The PCC is the highest legislative body in the nation of New Afrika. The PCC's job is to create legislation that is supposed to govern our lives. Initiate rules to guide our work. The faulty notion of having to have "democratic processes" lead to the ultra democratic policy of creating imitation electoral districts; legitimizing this grouping by having them voted for by people without who had no clue as to what they were voting for.

That moved to the PGRNA having people doing recruitment who were not clear on what they were recruiting people to do. The PCC moved from being the highest legislative body in the Nation to a group of individuals vaguely interested in talking about the concepts nationhood, national independence, national liberation but never studying these concepts...just talking about them.

The idea of a revolutionary provisional government of a people at war was/is totally missing from the present manifestation of the PCC and the move to using popular elections to build the PG has crippled the work.

So now you have people in leadership with titles and positions who don't know anything about what they should be leading. People have begun trying to build a conventional government and act like a conventional government rather than structure a revolutionary Provisional Government that serves the New Afrikan masses. Unfortunately it appears that the lack of study renders these present PGRNA government workers to not know the difference.

The first national project that I remember getting involved with was the international New Afrikan Prisoner of War SOLIDARITY DAY. Held in Jackson,

Mississippi in August 1973 on the second anniversary of the arrest of the RNA 11. It brought together forces domestically as well as internationally in SOLIDARITY with New Afrikan PPOW's. This work was lead by the then National Minister of Information Fulani Obafemi. In fact it is where I got to study the work ethics and discipline of the National Minister of Information that led to our eventual marriage in December 1976.

The first local project that I got involved with was the Lincoln Hospital drug detoxification program. Lincoln Detox - under the leadership of the PGRNA Ministry of Interior. The Interior ministry was headed up by brother Jeral Williams, today known as Dr. Mutulu Shakur.

Lincoln Detox was the program that had the lowest rate of recidivism in the entire world. Started by a takeover of the Nurses' residence at Lincoln Hospital by Black Panthers and Young Lords, holding them and negotiating with the City of New York and its Health and Hospitals for community organizers who had created programs to serve the people to get official salaries for their work. They served the mentally ill, the substance abusers, the welfare recipients, organized hospital workers, and organized the community. It maintained and built upon the SOLIDARITY of black and brown/New Afrikan and Puerto Rican it was founded on.

Lincoln detox was a central element in the building of BAD, the Black Anti-Drug Movement. BAD was a national network of revolutionary substance abuse workers and centers. The primary centers of BAD were Lincoln Detox in the Bronx, New York and RAP INC. in Washington, D.C. The center became our center from which to combat genocide. Dr. Mutulu Shakur reported on research which provided proof that whether the drugs were over the counter or off the corner long and short term use of drugs was detrimental to our vital organs. It was here that we began researching and applying Acupuncture becoming the first center in the country to offer Methadone detox and refuse to offer the Methadone Maintenance as a program. As this became an obstacle for the pharmaceutical companies being unable to claim to the public that Methadone Maintenance programs was a 'service' to our community.

The decision to stop serving as a Methadone Maintenance program meant that funds from pharmaceutical companies and support from the state would soon be cut off. The detox collective formed BAAANA, the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America, bought a building in Harlem and set up its own community based privately owned clinic and organizations.

Another area of work of the New York based RNA government workers was working with the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners; the paralegal attachment to that committee became the embryo of the National Task Force for COINTELPRO Research and Litigation. This arm of political prisoners support work actively compiled information gathered through on our prisoners that could persuade prosecutors that it was more expedient to let prisoners go than to bring into court more hard evidence exposing the US government's counter-intelligence program.

After leaving New York I served as a government worker in Washington, DC. It was while serving as a government worker in Washington, DC that I noticed first that the government administration handbook wasn't being used. We reintroduced it, made some clear improvements and expansion in work. We also made some enemies.

It was here that we also encountered liberalism and a tendency to do certain things based on unprincipled personal relationships; particularly in regard to President Imari Obadele. I often challenged this tendency making more enemies. Especially when making statements that his ideas were, from my point of view, not revolutionary nationalism. "How could you say that?", Chokwe would ask.

I could say that then and still say it now, based on his own statements in his own writings.

The points of clear departure already stated 1. his claim that working for US Army general excluded him from collective study and training. 2. the ideas that we didn't need to engage in mass organizing around our people's needs but merely hold a plebiscite to win political control over a geographical area.

I would humbly stand corrected if someone could point out to me any unsoundness in my position.

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SOME RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS A RECTIFICATION POLICY IN THE NEW AFRIKAN NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT/ INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT ---COLLECTIVE STUDY, WORK STUDY, TRAINING, WORK & CRITICAL REVIEW

- 1. Everyone needs to engage in a review and restudy process. Older (in work) cadre must engage with each other on a collective process with one another to insure more evenly developed future cadre.
- 2. Every (new) interested party should engage with a study process before engaging in actual work.
- 3. After engaging in an organized study process each potential cadre should be part of a work/study process that gradually graduates that person to becoming an actual cadre.
- 4. Redevelopment of a Government Administrative Handbook.
- 5. Reengage process of establishing local units according to the proposed new government administration handbook. Develop and include a work/study process.
- 6. Develop a study & training process that includes physical development so that everyone's level of physical capacity and endurance can be assessed and critiqued.
- 7. Develop and establish a process of teaching, testing and grading. Employ SELF-CRITICISM.
- 8. COMBAT LIBERALISM. engage in the UNITY-CRITICISM-UNITY process.

We welcome comments, criticism, additional rectification, and hones dialogue on the subject.

# FREE THE LAND! BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!

Bilal Sunni-Ali



Bilal Sunni-Ali was a man of fortitude and conviction. We called him Spirit. That name fit him so perfectly and was so endearing, not just because of his ease of temperament but also the calmhe projected into your very spirit, making you feel everything was going to be alright.

It mattered not the external circumstances we found ourselves in - It was the 70's Bronx, NY, Anderson Avenue Bronx, rent strikes, organizing to Free the Land, or incarceration - Bilal exuded a very compassionate spirit of kindness, dedication and love. Just by being in his presence we were always a tat taller, a pitch calmer, a step more reassured the struggle for freedom was a noble endeavor.

He gave us the music by which we worked, laughed, and cried - The Liberation Song, Must Be Something and of course Western Sunrise - the Bilal Sax solo always blowing the roof off!! *We Beg Your Pardon America* was the first introduction of rap mixed with songs of protest helping to cultivate the creativity and mission for a young 4-year-old Tupac Amaru Shakur.

In October 1981 during the Brinks Robbery RICO trial, Bilal was one of the defendants on trial charged in the RICO act. He was found not guilty after a long trial. I used to see Bilal in the hallways of the dungeon MCC, 150 Park Row, as we were being held in civil contempt of court

for having refused to testify before the Brinks Grand Jury after being subpoenaed. Whenever our paths crossed while being escorted by guards, Spirit always managed a simple nod, conveying love and support so appreciated - it was like you could hear that Sax blowin' with every smile.

The picture of Spirit carrying his daughter, Asantewa, was taken outside MCC jail, lower Manhattan – 1984. You can see the jail looming in the background. I love this picture because it is symbolic of the Spirit of Bilal - always caring, carrying, and standing tall. He was always in harmony with the Universe. He is a brother who made all the trials by fire bearable - less harrowing, almost harmonic. Never a harsh word, never bitter or bleak - always in tune with a higher vibration. Salute to my dear brother Bilal Sunni Ali - I will always honor your Spirit and divine Soul.

Peace and Eternal Love, Yaasmyn Fula Mother of Yaki Kadafi Fula

