

NEWS

Two men acquitted of Malcom X murder to receive \$36m



This combination photo shows Muhammad Aziz, a suspect in the slaying of Malcolm X, after his arrest, in New York, on February 26, 1965, left, and Aziz outside court after his conviction in the killing of Malcolm X was vacated, on Thursday, November 18, 2021, in New York [File: AP Photo] Source: Aljazeera; Image source: AP

The two men whose convictions for the 1965 assassination of Malcolm X were overturned last year will receive \$36m from the city and state of New York, their lawyer confirmed.

“The tragedy of Malcolm X’s murder was felt all over the world, and compounded by the fact that it led to the convictions and imprisonment of two innocent, young, Black men in America,” their lawyer David Shanies said in an emailed statement to AFP on Sunday night.

The two men, Muhammad Aziz and Khalil Islam, always maintained they did not commit the murder.

Aziz, 84, had sought \$40m after

serving about two decades in prison and more than 55 years after being wrongly blamed in the case that raised questions about racism in the criminal justice system. Aziz is married and has six children.

Islam, who died in 2009 at age 74, also spent more than 20 years in prison and was exonerated in November 2021. His estate had also filed a \$40m suit.

They were released in the mid-1980s, but it was not until November 2021 that their names were fully cleared by the New York State Supreme Court, which called their convictions almost a half-century ago “a failure of justice”.

“Today we acknowledge that injustice and take a modest step towards rectifying it,” said Shanies.

He confirmed a report from the New York Times that the city of New York will pay \$26m to be split between 84-year-old Aziz and the family of Islam.

The state government of New York will also pay five million dollars each, for a total of \$36m in compensation.

Nick Paolucci, a spokesman for the New York City Law Depart-

ment, told the New York Times on Sunday: “[T]his settlement brings some measure of justice to individuals who spent decades in prison and bore the stigma of being falsely accused of murdering an iconic figure.”

For more than half a century, the official record held that three members of the Black nationalist group Nation of Islam – which Malcolm X had recently renounced – shot the iconic 39-year-old leader in front of his wife and children when he arrived to speak at the podium of a Harlem ballroom.

A man with a sawn-off shotgun rushed the stage and shot Malcolm once in the chest. Two others with semi-automatic pistols charged forwards, firing at him. He was pronounced dead at a nearby hospital with 21 gunshot wounds.

His funeral in Harlem was attended by leading Black civil rights leaders and as many as 30,000 mourners in the streets.

Aziz, Islam and a third man, Mujahid Abdul Halim, were convicted in 1966 – but historians had long cast doubt on that thesis.

Abdul Halim – now 81 and released from prison in 2010 – confessed to the murder but maintained the innocence of the other two.



Malcolm X speaks to reporters in Washington, DC, May 16, 1963 [AP Photo]

In 1972 CBS Records commissioned Harvard Business School and CBS Black Music Marketing Director, Logan Westbrook, to develop and for CBS to implement, a “Study of the Soul Music Environment.” It was intended to be a simple, productive “blueprint” for Soul music. The result was CBS Records receiving decades of praise for its contributions to an era of strong music, along with employment in positions previously denied to Blacks in the music industry, all the way to astonishing charges of corporate collusion, racism, payoffs, and greed for the enrichment of White corporate America at the expense of powerful, Black-owned, self-distributed record labels like Stax and Motown. Dr. Westbrook and Schuyler “Sky” Traugotter take us on an historical music business roller coaster ride of personal and public domain stories. It covers decades of controversial revelations of how “The Harvard Report” may or may not have lived up to its reputation of being both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—the Savior and the Demon—of what Black Music became during this tumultuous period culminating in the uncertain state of Black Music today. Questions...did CBS Records set the wheels in motion for the demise of smaller Black-owned record labels? Or was it an inevitability? POWER 101 offers answers and food for thought.

IN THE HUDDLE

with Coach Jennings

Stay In Faith

—TODAY’S SCRIPTURE—

(Job 23:8–10, NKJV)

Look, I go forward, but...I cannot see HIM. But HE knows the way that I take; when HE has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.

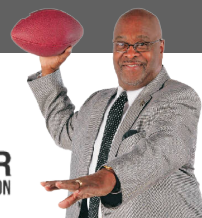
—TODAY’S WORD—

I’ve learned that our character is more important than our talent. We can have all the talent in the world, but if we don’t have strong character, we won’t go very far. We can all trust GOD in the good times. But can you trust HIM with the secret frustrations that haven’t changed? You’ve prayed and believed, but GOD hasn’t removed it. The question is not only if you can trust GOD, but more important, if GOD can trust you. Too many people let frustrations cause them to get sour, lose their passion, and slack off. Will you pass that test and stay in faith even when you can’t see what GOD is doing? Keep doing the right thing, keep being good to people, keep giving it your best and having an excellent spirit. Nothing may be happening on the outside, but if you keep the right attitude, something is happening inside. GOD is changing you. If you keep trusting GOD, you will rise higher, overcome obstacles, and become everything you were created to be.

—PRAYER FOR TODAY—

FATHER, thank YOU that when I can’t see what YOU’re doing, I still have every reason to trust YOU. Thank YOU that the times of testing will pass and that I will come forth as gold through it. I believe that YOU are changing me into the person YOU created me to be. In JESUS’ Name, Amen.

Lurone “Coach” Jennings
Mary Walker Foundation
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