Guide to
the Microfilm Edition
of the

FBI File on
The Muslim
Mosque Inc.

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FBI File on Malcolm X (10 rolls)
FBI File on W. E. B. Du Bois (1 roll)
FBI File on the Organization of Afro-American Unity (1 roll)
FBI File on Elijah Muhammad (3 rolls)
Introduction

The Muslim Mosque Inc. was founded by Malcolm X in March 1964 when he separated from Elijah Muhammad’s Nation of Islam. To a great extent, the history of the Muslim Mosque Inc. was coextensive with that of its charismatic leader and effectively ended with his assassination in February 1965.

The story of Malcolm X’s conversion to Islam as a young man while serving a prison term has become the stuff of legends, both through Malcolm’s autobiography, written with Alex Haley shortly before Malcolm’s death, and through Spike Lee’s film biography, “X.” Born in 1925 to a part-time Baptist minister and his wife in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm Little heard his father, a disciple of Marcus Garvey, preach blacks’ dignity and right to self-determination. But the racial violence that attended the family for much of Malcolm’s childhood culminated in his father’s death on streetcar tracks—murdered by white racists, according to Malcolm’s version—when Malcolm was six. Malcolm’s mother declined into insanity; the children became wards of the state.

Malcolm dropped out of school at age fifteen and, after a short stint as an attendant on Pullman trains between New York and Boston, began running numbers in Harlem. He looked older than his years and soon was involved in illegal drugs, gambling, and pimping. In February 1946 he was arrested and convicted for burglary in Boston and was sent to Charlestown State Prison, where he began an intensive program of self-education.

Through his brother, Malcolm became acquainted with the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of a black nationalist movement called the Lost-Found Nation of Islam. The Nation of Islam had been founded in 1931 in Detroit by Robert Poole, who received a revelation about the true history of the world and the relationships among the races. He changed his name to Elijah Muhammad and began spreading his message about the true nature of blue-eyed white “devils,” the inherent genetic superiority of the
black races, and the need for economic and political separation from white America.

Upon his release from prison in 1952, Malcolm traveled to Detroit, where he became a fervid disciple of Elijah Muhammad. His ardent work on behalf of this tiny sect multiplied its membership dramatically, and by 1960 it had become a truly national religion with almost ten thousand followers. Malcolm was soon its most prominent spokesperson, making radio and television appearances and speaking on university campuses across the country. His message of separation, violent revolution, and belief in the universal depravity of white people found a receptive audience. In June 1954 he was appointed the minister of the Nation of Islam’s Harlem mosque, the largest in the country.

Malcolm’s formal breach with the Nation of Islam happened on March 8, 1964. After being placed under a ban of silence by Muhammad for his inflammatory comments about the Kennedy assassination in December 1963, Malcolm broke his silence by stating that he intended to separate from the Nation of Islam and to establish his own organization, the Muslim Mosque Inc. Some believe that the breach occurred over Malcolm’s resentment of the Nation of Islam’s hesitancy to directly and actively confront racism. Others suspect that Malcolm’s dynamism and popularity had begun to overshadow Muhammad’s leadership in Chicago and that Malcolm’s comments on the president’s death simply provided a convenient excuse to expel him from the community. Still others believe that Malcolm was disillusioned by his discovery of Muhammad’s sexual liaisons with a succession of secretaries and began telling others within the Nation of Islam about the infidelities. When word of the betrayal reached Muhammad, Malcolm was warned that the Nation of Islam would not stand for slander of its leader.

In May 1964, shortly after his break with Muhammad, Malcolm made his pilgrimage to Mecca, where for the first time he encountered people of all races peacefully coexisting in the name of Islam. This experience of “true Is-
lam” began a transformation that took him away from mili-
tant black nationalism and toward a goal of true white-
black brotherhood and mutual transformation of American
society.

The FBI file on the Muslim Mosque Inc., reproduced
here, opens with Malcolm X’s split with the Nation of Is-
lam. Malcolm himself had attracted FBI attention as early
as 1953, when the Bureau was told that he might be a Com-
munist sympathizer. But Malcolm’s role as what one writer
calls “an exotic racial incendiary” prompted the surveil-
lance of the Muslim Mosque Inc. that continued even be-
yond his death. Malcolm’s longtime advocacy of rifle clubs
to prepare his black Nationalists to resist their white op-
pressors and to establish an African state on American soil
also aroused suspicion, particularly because Communist
countries, such as Cuba and China, were widely thought
to be involved in such militancy.

As Malcolm X neared the end of his life, he suspected
that members of the Nation of Islam, as well as powerful
government constituencies, wanted him dead. His home,
where he, his wife, and his four young children were sleep-
ing, was firebombed in the early morning of February 14,
1965. Just a week later, in the Audubon Ballroom at 166th
Street and Broadway in the Washington Heights section of
Manhattan, Malcolm was gunned down while addressing
a meeting of his followers. Although two of his three as-
sailants were black Muslims, no conspiracy was ever re-
vealed. Already weakened by controversy and indirectin
without Malcolm’s dynamism and without a chosen suc-
cessor, the Muslim Mosque Inc., withered away.

The documents reproduced here were drawn from the
Washington files of the FBI and have been released under
the Freedom of Information Act; certain documents, or
portions of documents, have been deleted by the FBI pur-
suant to provisions of that legislation. The material has
been filmed in the exact order and condition in which it
was released, and every effort has been made to publish
the most legible copies available.
The file is in approximate chronological order, and the FBI did not index documents. The Roll Notes is not a complete inventory of the file; however, it gives an indication of the types of material or specific documents that may be particularly worthwhile for research.
Roll Notes

SECTION 1
Mar.–Apr. 1964  Roll 1, 0002–0297
Internal Security: Malcolm X
Malcolm X announces his departure from the
   Nation of Islam (NOI) and his forming the Muslim
   Mosque Inc.
Excerpts from Malcolm X press conference
Attempt by the Nation of Islam (NOI) to oust Malcolm
   X from his home
Black Nationalism, "Ballots or Bullets" speech by
   Malcolm X
Transcript of radio program (Mar. 20, 1964) featuring
   host Joe Rainey and his guest Malcolm X
Chicago: establishing “rifle clubs” by civil rights
   activists
Transcript from television program (Apr. 4, 1964) with
   host Bud Dancy, featuring a debate between Malcolm
   X and Louis Lomax
Transcript from radio program (Apr. 7, 1964) with host
   Harve Morgan and his guest Malcolm X

SECTION 2
May–Jun. 1964  Roll 1, 0298–0569
Internal Security: Nation of Islam (NOI)
New York: Arming of “antiwhite” gangs in Harlem
Establishment of Muslim Mosque Inc. (MMI) branches
   in U.S. cities
New York: Rifle club members arrested, ammunition
   seized
Various investigations re: growth of “rifle clubs”
Excerpts from Malcolm X press conference to announce
   a debate with Louis Lomax (May 1964)
Surveillance of Malcolm X in Philadelphia (Jun. 1964)

SECTION 3
Jun.–Jul. 1964  Roll 1, 0570–END
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Muslim Mosque incorporation papers filed in New York
Rift between the Muslim Mosque Inc. and the Nation of Islam (NOI)
Extramarital affairs and illegitimate children of Elijah Muhammad
Malcolm X death threat
Excerpts from radio program (Jun. 12, 1964) host Paul Benzaquin interviews Malcolm X
Excerpts from radio program (Jun. 12, 1964) host Jerry Williams interviews Malcolm X
Transcript of “Dateline Chicago,” television program focusing on “Black Muslims at the Crossroads,” and featuring interviews with Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad
Transcript of “Kup’s Show” (May 23, 1964), a television program from Chicago with host Irving Kupcinet and guests Malcolm X and Dr. Louis Lomax
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)

SECTION 4
Jul.–Aug. 1964 Roll 2, 0002–0267
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)
Progressive Labor Movement
Death threats against Malcolm X

SECTION 5
Aug.–Sep. 1964 Roll 2, 0268–0511
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Malcolm X receives scholarships from El Hazar University, Egypt, for MMI members
Internal Security: Nation of Islam
Malcolm X and his split with Elijah Muhammad
Paternity suits against Elijah Muhammad
Black Nationalist Groups: Racial Matters
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)
SECTION 6
Oct.–Dec. 1964 Roll 2, 0512–0785
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Afro-Descendant Upliftment Society (ADUS)
Wallace Muhammad breaks with his father
Black Nationalist Groups: Racial Matters
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)

SECTION 7
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
International Muslim Brotherhood
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)
Black Nationalist Groups: Racial Matters

SECTION 8
Feb.–Apr. 1965 Roll 3, 0002–0299
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc. (MMI)
Excerpt from “Kup’s Show” (Jan. 30, 1965), a television program from Chicago with host Irving Kupcinet and guest Malcolm X
The assassination of Malcolm X
Internal Security: Nation of Islam (NOI)

SECTION 9
Apr.–Jun. 1965 Roll 3, 0300–0522
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU)
Socialist Workers’ Party (SWP)
Black Nationalist Groups TOPLEV Informant Program
Assassination of Malcolm X

SECTION 10
Internal Security: Muslim Mosque Inc.
Paternity suits involving Elijah Muhammad
Black Nationalist Groups TOPLEV Informant Program
Gun Rifle Clubs, New York City area
Black Muslims coming to Utah

SECTION 11
Black Muslims coming to Utah