

Prison transfer sought for Malcolm X's grandson

By Hazel Trice Edney

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The lawyer and family of Malcolm Shabazz, the 19-year-old grandson of civil rights martyr Malcolm X, say they are requesting that he be transferred out of an upstate New York prison after he was allegedly beaten and harassed by prison guards.

"We have investigated it to the extent that we are able and we've concluded that there was an assault on Malcolm by prison guards," says Ron Kuby, the New York City lawyer representing Malcolm.

"What people need to understand is that this is happening to Malcolm Shabazz because of who this young man is... It seems fairly clear that a number of White corrections officers view Malcolm with great hostility because of his Islamic faith, his heritage, and the fact that he's within their grasp. It has been a persistent problem, but this is the worst that it's been to date."

Kuby has sent a letter to Glenn S. Goord, commissioner of the New York Department of Correctional Services, asking that Malcolm be transferred out of Great



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— Ilyasah Shabazz

Meadow Correctional Facility, a maximum-security facility, five hours from New York City, to a lower security facility closer to home.

"I think Malcolm would profit from more extensive interaction with his family," the December 22 letter from the lawyer states. "We are looking towards the possibility of placing him in an out-of-state residential educational program that has achieved remarkable results with troubled youth."

Malcolm's aunt, Ilyasah Shabazz, of Peekskill, N.Y., the daughter of Malcolm X, with whom the teenager lived for much of his life, says she visited him the day after Christmas.

"I saw his lip was busted and a lot of his arm had like punch marks and then

scratches and stuff... He was beaten up. He was beaten up," Shabazz says in an interview with the NNPA News Service.

Shabazz and Kuby say the injuries are not serious, but the harassment has been consistent.

"They're trying to break his spirit," Shabazz charges. "He has become more and more focused. He has used the time there very wisely, with the reading and going deeply inside of himself, becoming spiritually grounded and trying to understand who he is and what everything is around him."

The teenager, convicted of second-degree attempted robbery in Middletown, N.Y., has been serving a three-and-a-half year sentence at Great Meadow. The attempted robbery

arrest came five years after he confessed to setting the 1997 fire that killed his 61-year-old grandmother Betty Shabazz, Malcolm X's wife, in her Yonkers, N.Y. apartment. Then 12, young Malcolm pled guilty to setting the blaze and served four years in several juvenile institutions. He says he never meant to hurt his grandmother.

Linda Foglia, a spokeswoman for Great Meadow, denies that Malcolm was beaten.

"On December 19th, Mr. Shabazz had refused to enter his cell," she says. "He behaved aggressively and had to be restrained by two officers who grabbed his arms. There was no other use of force involved and that was about it."

Asked about whether Malcolm suffered a busted lip, Foglia replied, "I can't discuss any of his medical claims with you, only because we're prohibited."

His aunt says Malcolm gives a different account of what happened.

"From what I understand, he was on his way to the mess hall. He gave someone a piece of candy. You're not sup-

posed to do that. You're not supposed to talk. You're supposed to just be quiet. And the officer said, 'No talking' or something, and he told Malcolm to go back to his cell. Malcolm turned around and he was going back to his cell. When he got to his cell [other guards] said, 'What are you doing here?' And he said, 'I was told to come back to

my cell."

Shabazz says she is not clear at what point a scuffle took place.

"They tell him to do one thing and then they try to make a mockery of him," she says.

Foglia says a prison hearing conducted on December 31 found Malcolm guilty of (See Malcolm X, Page 6)

Bush derides critic of education law

CRAWFORD, Texas (AP) — Gearing up for a possible election year fight on his education initiative, President Bush defended his "No Child Left Behind" law against critics who say it's been shortchanged and assumes all students learn at the same rates.

"The time for excuses has passed," Bush said Saturday in his weekly radio address.

Bush plans to mark the second anniversary of the initiative, the cornerstone of his domestic agenda, during speeches at an elementary school in St. Louis and one in Knoxville, Tenn.

Bush and other Republicans say the law, which the president signed on Jan. 8, 2002, expands testing and toughens standards for teachers, schools and students.

The initiative, however, has lost support of some Democrats who say too little money has been spent on the mandated actions. Critics have argued that the funding increases that Bush touts aren't nearly enough to cover the costs of the new requirements, including the expense of creating tests and processing their results.

Congressional Democrats have tried without success to provide billions of dollars of additional funding.

In the weekly Democratic radio address, Rep. Tim Bishop, D-N.Y., said this year's congressional agenda needs to include more money for "No Child Left Behind."

"Improving education is an American priority," Bishop said. "But last year, it was left under funded by more than \$8 billion. This gap has placed a great burden on our educators and local school taxes."

Critics also say that the way the federal grading system works isn't fair in some cases because it requires yearly progress not just from a school, but from every subgroup of students, including those with disabilities or ones who speak English as a second language.

Bush, however, defended the ambitious standards. "Some critics have objected to these reforms because they believe our expectations are too high, or that it is unfair to hold all students to the same standards regardless of background, or that we're punishing schools that are not making progress," he said.

"Our reforms insist on high standards because we know every child can learn. Our reforms call for testing because the worst discrimination is to ignore a school's failure to teach every child."

Muslim football teams lose controversial names

IRVINE, Calif. (AP) — After objections to team names like "Soldiers of Allah" and "Moujahideen" overshadowed a football tournament organized by Muslim youths, the players sacked most of the offending names and took to the field to more cheers than protests.

Jewish leaders had objected to some of the planned names, and Muslim leaders asked the teams to reconsider. One member of a team called Intifada said a few of his friends quit because their parents were worried for their safety. Organizers said none of the names were meant to

offend, and players refused to change some of them, including Intifada.

"We're just playing football," said Sabih Khan, 18, a tournament organizer. "It's just sport. There's no politics involved." About 120 mostly Muslim men in their teens and early 20s played under clear skies at a suburban park as friends and family cheered from the sidelines.

Five protesters waved placards at the park entrance, far removed from the football field. Their signs said, "Murder is not a game," and "When these guys throw the bomb, they really throw a

bomb."

"To me, these names glorify terrorism," said Barry Spatz, a Jewish psychologist from Laguna Niguel. He carried a sign showing pictures of victims killed by suicide bombers in Israel. "If Muslim youth want to get together and do something positive, that's fine. But this is an insult to me," Spatz said.

Intifada means "uprising" in Arabic and is used by some Palestinians to describe revolts against Israeli occupation. "Moujahideen" translates as "holy warrior" and is associated with Islamic groups the United States char-

acterizes as terrorist organizations. The protests had little effect on the competition. Fourteen squads battled for a first place trophy during the one-day tournament.

Rather than threatening, some of the team names — including Fantizzle Fizzle — were just silly. The team name Muslim Rangers was replaced on a tournament list with Irvine Alumni.

Warming up for his first game, Oomar Patel, 23, waved off the controversy. "To each his own," said Patel, a police officer in Garden Grove. "I'm just here to play football and have some fun."

Poll

(Continued from Page 1) and CEO. "We share the information with the public, both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and members of our organization. We share that information with our members so the people will understand the kinds of concerns and the issues that are important to our community."

The Black vote, 90 percent of which supported the Democratic Party in the 2000 presidential race, will be key in the 2004 election. Trying to capitalizing on recurring

complaints that Democrats take the Black vote for granted, GOP Chairman Ed Gillespie has said his party's outreach to Black voters is a top priority for 2004, especially among college students and younger voters age 18-35, who may not identify with either major political party.

Leslie B. McLemore, professor of political science at Jackson State University in Mississippi, says the GOP faces an uphill battle.

"The Republican Party is going to have to build up some credibility in the Black com-

munity and quite frankly, most Republicans don't have credibility in the Black community," says McLemore. "They have not had a consistent policy dealing with the African-American community, so this is a kind of hit and miss operation."

Campbell says the Unity '04 campaign goal is to increase the Black vote to at least 5 percent higher than the 53.5 percent of the turnout in 2000.

According to the NCBCP, the Black vote has not been at 58.5 percent since 1964, the

year that Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which expanded the federal government's role in protecting the rights of Blacks and other people of color.

The nine Democratic presidential candidates have participated in a string of debates, but have largely focused on foreign affairs, such as the war.

Campbell says Unity '04 will hold issue forums, town hall meetings and candidate debates with specific focus on issues that Black voters want to hear.

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