

= Assata Shakur =

Assata Olugbala Shakur (born JoAnne Deborah Byron ; July 16 , 1947) , whose married name was Chesimard , is an African @-@ American activist and member of the former Black Panther Party (BPP) and Black Liberation Army (BLA) . Between 1971 and 1973 , Shakur was convicted of several crimes and was the subject of a multistate manhunt .

In May 1973 , Shakur was involved in a shootout on the New Jersey Turnpike , in which she was accused of killing New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster and grievously assaulting Trooper James Harper . BLA member Zayd Malik Shakur was also killed in the incident , and Shakur was wounded . Between 1973 and 1977 , Shakur was indicted in relation to six other incidents ? charged with murder , attempted murder , armed robbery , bank robbery , and kidnapping ? resulting in three acquittals and three dismissals . In 1977 , she was convicted of the first @-@ degree murder of Foerster and of seven other felonies related to the shootout .

Shakur was incarcerated in several prisons in the 1970s . She escaped from prison in 1979 and fled to Cuba in 1984 after living as a fugitive for a few years , and received political asylum . She has been living in Cuba ever since . Since May 2 , 2005 , the FBI has classified her as a domestic terrorist and offered a \$ 1 million reward for assistance in her capture . On May 2 , 2013 , the FBI added her to the Most Wanted Terrorist List ; the first woman to be listed . On the same day , the New Jersey Attorney General offered to match the FBI reward , increasing the total reward for her capture to \$ 2 million .

= = Early life = =

Shakur was born in Jamaica , Queens , New York City , on July 16 , 1947 , where she lived for three years with her parents and grandparents , Lula and Frank Hill . After her parents divorced in 1950 , Shakur spent most of her childhood in Wilmington , North Carolina with her grandmother , until her family relocated to Queens when she was a teenager . Assata describes her Aunt Evelyn as the heroine of her childhood , as she was constantly exposing Assata to new things . In her autobiography , Assata writes about how her Aunt encouraged her to read , visited museums and saw plays with her and describes her aunt as " very sophisticated and knew all kinds of things . She was right up my alley because I was forever asking all kinds of questions . I wanted to know everything . " (Pg . 40) For a time , she ran away from home and lived with strangers until she was taken in by her aunt , Evelyn Williams , who later became her lawyer . Shakur dropped out of high school , but later earned a General Educational Development (GED) with her aunt 's help . Before dropping out of high school , Shakur attended a segregated school in New York which she writes about within her autobiography . Constantly being either the only black student or one of few , Shakur describes how the integrated school system was poorly set up . She talks about how teachers would act surprised whenever she would answer a question in class , as if they were surprised that black people can be intelligent . Shakur talks about how history was often taught sugar coated , and that students were taught a history that erases the oppression that people of color have experienced . She references a play about George Washington 's birthday in which she participated in , and how her role within the play was to sing ? George Washington never told a lie ? over and over again ; Her reaction to participating in the play is shared in her autobiography as ? I didn ? t know what a fool they had made out of me until i grew up and started to read real history ? (Pg 33) . Shakur attended Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) and then the City College of New York (CCNY) in the mid @-@ 1960s , where she was involved in many political activities , protests , and sit @-@ ins .

Shakur was arrested for the first time in 1967 with 100 other BMCC students , on charges of trespassing . The students had chained and locked the entrance to a college building to protest a curriculum deficient in black studies and a lack of black faculty . She married Louis Chesimard , a fellow student @-@ activist at CCNY , in April 1967 , and divorced him in December 1970 . Shakur devotes only one paragraph of her autobiography to her marriage , attributing its termination to disagreements related to gender roles .

After graduation from CCNY at 23 , Shakur became involved in the Black Panther Party (BPP) , and eventually became a leading member of the Harlem branch . Before joining the BPP , Shakur had met several of its members on a 1970 trip to Oakland , California . One of Shakur 's main activities with the BPP was coordinating a school breakfast program . However , she soon left the Party , charging macho behavior of males in these organizations , but did not go as far as other female Panthers like Regina Jennings , who left the organization over sexual harassment . Instead , Shakur 's main criticism of the BPP was its alleged lack of focus on black history :

" The basic problem stemmed from the fact that the BPP had no systematic approach to political education . They were reading the Red Book but didn 't know who Harriet Tubman , Marcus Garvey , and Nat Turner were . They talked about intercommunalism but still really believed that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves . A whole lot of them barely understood any kind of history , Black , African or otherwise . [...] That was the main reason many Party members , in my opinion , underestimated the need to unite with other Black organizations and to struggle around various community issues . "

That same year Chesimard changed her name to Assata Shakur and joined the Black Liberation Army (BLA) , ? a radical and violent organization of black activists ? " whose primary objective (was) to fight for the independence and self @-@ determination of Afrikan people in the United States . " In 1971 , Shakur joined the Republic of New Afrika , an organization formed to create an independent black @-@ majority nation composed of Alabama , Georgia , Louisiana , Mississippi , and South Carolina .

= = Allegations and manhunt = =

On April 6 , 1971 , Shakur was shot in the stomach during a struggle with a guest at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Midtown Manhattan and was arrested on a string of charges . According to police , Shakur knocked on the door of a room occupied by an out @-@ of @-@ town guest and asked " Is there a party going on here ? " to which the occupant responded in the negative . Shakur then allegedly displayed a revolver and a struggle ensued , during which she was shot . She was booked on charges of attempted robbery , felonious assault , reckless endangerment , and possession of a deadly weapon , then released on bail . Shakur is alleged to have said that she was glad that she had been shot since , having experienced what it was like , she was no longer afraid to be shot again .

Following an August 23 , 1971 bank robbery in Queens , Shakur was sought for questioning , and a photograph of a woman (who was later alleged to be Shakur) with thick @-@ rimmed black glasses , a high hairdo pulled tightly over her head , and a steadily pointed gun became ubiquitous in banks and full page print ads paid for by the New York Clearing House Association . On December 21 , 1971 , Shakur was named as one of four suspects by New York City police in a hand grenade attack that destroyed a police car and slightly injured two patrolmen in Maspeth , Queens ; a 13 @-@ state alarm was issued three days after the attack when a witness identified Shakur and Andrew Jackson from FBI photographs . Atlanta law enforcement officials said that Shakur and Jackson had lived together for several months in Atlanta , Georgia , in the summer of 1971 .

Shakur was one of those wanted for questioning for wounding a police officer attempting to serve a traffic summons in Brooklyn on January 26 , 1972 . After a March 1 , 1972 \$ 89 @,@ 000 Brooklyn bank robbery , a Daily News headline asked : " Was that JoAnne ? " ; Shakur was also wanted for questioning after a further September 1 , 1972 Bronx bank robbery . Msgr. John Powis alleged that Shakur was involved in an armed robbery at his Our Lady of the Presentation church in Brownsville , Brooklyn , on September 14 , 1972 , based on FBI photographs .

In 1972 , Shakur was the subject of a nationwide manhunt after the FBI alleged that she was the " revolutionary mother hen " of a Black Liberation Army cell that had conducted a " series of cold @-@ blooded murders of New York City police officers , " including the " execution style murders " of New York Police Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones on May 21 , 1971 and Gregory Foster and Rocco Laurie on January 28 , 1972 . Shakur was alleged to have been directly involved with the Foster and Laurie murders , and involved with the Piagentini and Jones murders . Some

sources go further , identifying Shakur as the de facto leader and the " soul of the Black Liberation Army " after the arrest of co @-@ founder Dhoruba Moore . Robert Daley , Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Police , for example , described Shakur as " the final wanted fugitive , the soul of the gang , the mother hen who kept them together , kept them moving , kept them shooting . "

As of February 17 , 1972 , when Shakur was identified as one of four BLA members on a short trip to Chattanooga , Tennessee , Shakur was wanted for questioning (along with Robert Vickers , Twyman Meyers , Samuel Cooper , and Paul Stewart) in relation to police killings , a Queens bank robbery , and the grenade attack . Shakur was announced as one of six suspects (pictured left) in the ambushing of four policemen ? two in Jamaica , Queens , and two in Brooklyn ? on January 28 , 1973 , despite the fact that the assailants were identified as male .

By June 1973 , an apparatus that would become the FBI 's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) was issuing near daily briefings on Shakur 's status and the allegations against her . According to Cleaver and Katsiaficas , the FBI and local police " initiated a national search @-@ and @-@ destroy mission for suspected BLA members , collaborating in stakeouts that were the products of intensive political repression and counterintelligence campaigns like NEWKILL " and " attempted to tie Assata to every suspected action of the BLA involving a woman . " The JTTF would later serve as the " coordinating body in the search for Assata and the renewed campaign to smash the BLA , " after her escape from prison . After her capture , however , Shakur was not charged with any of the crimes that had made her the subject of the manhunt .

Shakur and others claim that she was targeted by the FBI 's COINTELPRO as a result of her involvement with these organizations . Specifically , documentary evidence suggests that Shakur was targeted by an investigation named CHESROB , which " attempted to hook former New York Panther Joanne Chesimard (Assata Shakur) to virtually every bank robbery or violent crime involving a black woman on the East Coast . " Although named after Shakur , CHESROB (like its predecessor , NEWKILL) was not limited to Shakur .

= = New Jersey Turnpike shootout = =

On May 2 , 1973 , at about 12 : 45 a.m. , Assata Shakur , along with Zayd Malik Shakur (born James F. Costan) and Sundiata Acoli (born Clark Squire) , were stopped on the New Jersey Turnpike in East Brunswick by State Trooper James Harper , backed up by Trooper Werner Foerster in a second patrol vehicle (Car 820) , for driving with a broken tail light . According to Col. David B. Kelly , the vehicle was also " slightly " exceeding the speed limit . Recordings of Trooper Harper calling the dispatcher were played at the trials of both Acoli and Assata Shakur . After reporting his plans to stop the vehicle he had been following , Harper can later be heard to say : " Hold on ? two black males , one female . " The stop occurred 200 yards (183 m) south of what was then the Turnpike Authority administration building at exit 9 , the headquarters of Troop D. Zayd Shakur was driving the two @-@ door vehicle , Assata Shakur was seated in the right front seat , and Acoli was in the right rear seat . Trooper Harper asked the driver for identification , noticed a discrepancy , asked him to get out of the car , and questioned him at the rear of the vehicle .

It is at this point , with the questioning of Zayd Shakur , that the accounts of the confrontation begin to differ (see the witnesses section below) . However , in the ensuing shootout , Trooper Foerster was shot twice in the head with his own gun and killed , Zayd Shakur was killed , and Assata Shakur and Trooper Harper were wounded .

According to initial police statements , at this point one or more of the suspects began firing with semiautomatic handguns and Trooper Foerster fired four times before falling mortally wounded . At Acoli 's trial , Harper testified that the gunfight started " seconds " after Foerster arrived at the scene . At this trial , Harper said that Foerster reached into the vehicle , pulled out and held up a semiautomatic pistol and ammunition magazine , and said " Jim , look what I found , " while facing Harper at the rear of the vehicle . At this point , Assata Shakur and Acoli were ordered to put their hands on their laps and not to move ; Harper said that Assata Shakur then reached down to the right of her right leg , pulled out a pistol , and shot him in the shoulder , after which he retreated to behind his vehicle . Harper later retracted this version of events . Questioned by prosecutor C.

Judson Hamlin , Harper said he saw Foerster shot just as Assata Shakur was felled by bullets from Harper 's gun . Harper testified that Acoli shot Foerster with a .38 caliber semiautomatic pistol and then used Foerster 's own gun to " execute him . " According to the testimony of State Police investigators , two jammed semiautomatic pistols were discovered near Foerster 's body .

Acoli then drove the car (a white Pontiac LeMans with Vermont license plates) ? which contained Assata Shakur , who was wounded , and Zayd Shakur , who was dead or dying ? 5 miles (8 km) down the road at milepost 78 across from Service Area 8 @-@ N (the Joyce Kilmer Service Area) , where Assata Shakur was apprehended . The vehicle was chased by three patrol cars and the booths down the turnpike were alerted . Acoli then exited the car and ? after being ordered to halt by Trooper Robert Palentchar (Car 817) , the first on the scene ? fled into the woods as Palentchar emptied his gun . According to Palentchar , Assata Shakur then walked towards him from 50 feet (15 m) away with her bloody arms raised in surrender . Acoli was captured after a 36 @-@ hour manhunt ? involving 400 people , state police helicopters , and bloodhounds from the Ocean County Sheriff 's Department ? the following day . Zayd Shakur 's body was found in a nearby gully along the road .

At the time of the shootout , Assata Shakur was a member of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and no longer a member of the Black Panther Party . According to a New Jersey Police spokesperson , Assata Shakur was on her way to a " new hideout in Philadelphia " and " heading ultimately for Washington " and a book in the vehicle contained a list of potential BLA targets . Assata Shakur testified that she was on her way to Baltimore for a job as a bar waitress .

Assata Shakur , with gunshot wounds in both arms and a shoulder was moved to Middlesex General Hospital , under " heavy guard , " and was reported to be in " serious condition " ; Trooper Harper was wounded in the left shoulder , in " good " condition , and given a protective guard at the hospital . Assata Shakur was interrogated and arraigned from her hospital bed , and her medical care during this period is often alleged to have been " substandard . " She was transferred from Middlesex General Hospital in New Brunswick to Roosevelt Hospital in Edison after her lawyers obtained a court order from Judge John Bachman , and then transferred to Middlesex County Workhouse a few weeks later .

The Pontiac LeMans and Trooper Harper 's patrol car were taken to a state police garage in East Brunswick . Following the incident , on May 11 , the State Police instituted two @-@ man night patrols on the turnpike and Garden State Parkway , although the change was not made public until June .

= = Criminal charges and dispositions = =

Between 1973 and 1977 , in New York and New Jersey , Shakur was indicted ten times , resulting in seven different criminal trials . Shakur was charged with two bank robberies , the kidnapping of a Brooklyn heroin dealer , attempted murder of two Queens police officers stemming from a January 23 , 1973 failed ambush , and eight other felonies related to the Turnpike shootout . Of these trials , three resulted in acquittals , one in a hung jury , one in a change of venue , one in a mistrial due to pregnancy , and one in a conviction ; three indictments were dismissed without trial .

= = = Turnpike shootout change of venue = = =

On the charges related to the New Jersey Turnpike shootout , New Jersey Superior Court Judge Leon Gerofsky ordered a change of venue in 1973 from Middlesex to Morris County , New Jersey , saying " it was almost impossible to obtain a jury here comprised of people willing to accept the responsibility of impartiality so that defendants will be protected from transitory passion and prejudice . " Polls of residents in Middlesex County , where Acoli had been convicted less than three years earlier , showed that 83 % knew her identity and 70 % said she was guilty .

= = = Bronx bank robbery mistrial = = =

In December 1973 , Shakur was tried for a September 29 , 1972 , \$ 3 @, @ 700 robbery of the Manufacturer 's Hanover Trust Company in the Bronx , along with co @-@ defendant Kamau Sadiki (born Fred Hilton) . In light of the pending murder prosecution against Shakur in New Jersey state court , her lawyers requested that the trial be postponed for six months to permit further preparation . Judge Lee P. Gagliardi denied a postponement , and the Second Circuit denied Shakur 's petition for mandamus . In protest , the lawyers stayed mute , and Shakur and Sadiki conducted their own defense . Seven other BLA members were indicted by District Attorney Eugene Gold in connection with the series of holdups and shootings on the same day , who ? according to Gold ? represented the " top echelon " of the BLA as determined by a year @-@ long investigation .

The prosecution 's case rested largely on the testimony of two men who had pleaded guilty to participating in the holdup . The prosecution called four witnesses : Avon White and John Rivers (both of whom had already been convicted of the robbery) and the manager and teller of the bank . White and Rivers , although convicted , had not yet been sentenced for the robbery and were promised that the charges would be dropped in exchange for their testimony . White and Rivers testified that Shakur had guarded one of the doors with a .357 magnum pistol and that Sadiki had served as a lookout and drove the getaway truck during the robbery ; neither White nor Rivers was cross @-@ examined due to the defense attorney 's refusal to participate in the trial . Shakur 's aunt and lawyer , Evelyn Williams , was also cited for contempt after walking out of the courtroom after many of her attempted motions were denied . The trial was delayed for a few days after Shakur was diagnosed with pleurisy .

During the trial , the defendants were escorted to a " holding pen " outside the courtroom several times after shouting complaints and epithets at Judge Gagliardi . While in the holding pen , they listened to the proceedings over loudspeakers . Both defendants were repeatedly cited for contempt of court and eventually barred from the courtroom , where the trial continued in their absence . A contemporary New York Times editorial criticized Williams for failing to maintain courtroom " decorum , " comparing her actions to William Kunstler 's recent contempt conviction for his actions during the " Chicago Seven " trial .

Sadiki 's lawyer , Robert Bloom , attempted to have the trial dismissed and then postponed due to new " revelations " regarding the credibility of White , a former co @-@ defendant working for the prosecution . Bloom had been assigned to defend Hilton over the summer , but White was not disclosed as a government witness until right before the trial . Judge Gagliardi instructed both the prosecution and the defense not to bring up Shakur or Sadiki 's connections to the BLA , saying they were " not relevant . " Gagliardi denied requests by the jurors to pose questions to the witnesses ? either directly or through him ? and declined to provide the jury with information they requested about how long the defense had been given to prepare , saying it was " none of their concern . " This trial resulted in a hung jury and then a mistrial when the jury reported to Gagliardi that they were hopelessly deadlocked for the fourth time .

= = = Bronx bank robbery retrial = = =

The retrial was delayed for one day to give the defendants more time to prepare . The new jury selection was marked by attempts by Williams to be relieved of her duties due to disagreements with Shakur as well as Hilton 's attorney . Judge Arnold Bauman denied the application , but directed another lawyer , Howard Jacobs , to defend Shakur while Williams remained the attorney of record . Shakur was ejected following an argument with Williams , and Hilton left with her as jury selection continued . After the selection of twelve jurors (60 were excused) , Williams was allowed to retire from the case , with Shakur officially representing herself , assisted by lawyer Florynce Kennedy . In the retrial , White testified that the six alleged robbers had saved their hair clippings to create disguises , and identified a partially obscured head and shoulder in a photo taken from a surveillance camera as Shakur 's . Kennedy objected to this identification on the grounds that the prosecutor , assistant United States attorney Peter Truebner , had offered to stipulate that Shakur was not depicted in any of the photographs . Although both White and Rivers testified that Shakur was wearing overalls during the robbery , the person identified as Shakur in the photograph was

wearing a jacket . The defense attempted to discredit White on the grounds that he had spent eight months in Matteawan Hospital for the Criminally Insane in 1968 , and White countered that he had faked insanity (by claiming to be Allah in front of three psychiatrists) to get transferred out of prison .

Shakur personally cross @-@ examined the witnesses , getting White to admit that he had once been in love with her ; the same day , one juror (who had been frequently napping during the trial) was replaced with an alternate . Like the first trial , the retrial was marked by the defendants leaving and / or being thrown out of the court room for periods of varying lengths . Both defendants were acquitted in the retrial ; six jurors interviewed after the trial stated that they did not believe the two key prosecution witnesses . Shakur was immediately returned to Morristown , New Jersey , under a heavy guard following the trial . Louis Chesimard (Shakur 's ex @-@ husband) and Paul Stewart , the other two alleged robbers , had been acquitted in June .

= = = Turnpike shootout mistrial = = =

The Turnpike shootout proceedings continued with Judge John E. Bachman in Middlesex County . The jury was chosen from Morris County , which had a far smaller black population than Middlesex County . On this basis , Shakur unsuccessfully attempted to remove the trial to federal court .

Shakur was originally slated to be tried with Acoli , but the trials were separated (before jury selection was complete) due to Shakur 's pregnancy , and hers resulted in a mistrial in 1974 because of the possibility of miscarriage ; Shakur was then hospitalized on February 1 .

= = = Attempted murder dismissal = = =

Shakur and four others (including Fred Hilton , Avon White , and Andrew Jackson) were indicted in the State Supreme Court in Bronx on December 31 , 1973 on charges of attempting to shoot and kill two policemen ? Michael O 'Reilly and Roy Polliana , who were wounded but had since returned to duty ? in a January 28 , 1973 , ambush in St. Albans , Queens . On March 5 , 1974 , two new defendants (Jeannette Jefferson and Robert Hayes) were named in an indictment involving the same charges . On April 26 , while Shakur was pregnant , New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne signed an extradition order to move Shakur to New York to face two counts of attempted murder , attempted assault , and possession of dangerous weapons related to the alleged ambush ; however , Shakur declined to waive her right to an extradition hearing , and asked for a full hearing before Middlesex County Court Judge John E. Bachman .

Shakur was extradited to New York City on May 6 , arraigned on May 11 (pleading innocent) , and remanded to jail by Justice Albert S. McGrover of the State Supreme Court , pending a pretrial hearing on July 2 . In November 1974 , New York State Supreme Court Justice Peter Farrell dismissed the attempted murder indictment because of insufficient evidence , declaring " The court can only note with disapproval that virtually a year has passed before counsel made an application for the most basic relief permitted by law , namely an attack on the sufficiency of the evidence submitted by the grand jury . "

= = = Kidnapping trial = = =

Shakur was indicted on May 30 , 1974 , on the charge of having robbed a Brooklyn bar and kidnapping bartender James E. Freeman for ransom . Shakur and co @-@ defendant Ronald Myers were accused of entering the bar with pistols and shotguns , taking \$ 50 from the register , kidnapping the bartender , leaving a note demanding a \$ 20 @,@ 000 ransom from the bar owner , and fleeing in a rented truck . Freeman was said to have later escaped unhurt . The text of Shakur 's opening statement in the trial is reproduced in her autobiography . Shakur and co @-@ defendant Ronald Myers were acquitted on December 19 , 1975 after seven hours of jury deliberation , ending a three @-@ month trial in front of Judge William Thompson .

= = = Queens bank robbery trial = = =

In July 1973 , after being indicted by a grand jury , Shakur pleaded not guilty in Federal Court in Brooklyn to an indictment related to an August 31 , 1971 \$ 7 @, @ 700 robbery of the Bankers Trust Company bank in Queens . Judge Jacob Mishlerset set a tentative trial date of November 5 that year . The trial was delayed until 1976 , when Shakur was represented by Stanley Cohen and Evelyn Williams . In this trial , Shakur acted as her own co @-@ counsel and told the jury in her opening testimony :

" I have decided to act as co @-@ counsel , and to make this opening statement , not because I have any illusions about my legal abilities , but , rather , because there are things that I must say to you . I have spent many days and nights behind bars thinking about this trial , this outrage . And in my own mind , only someone who has been so intimately a victim of this madness as I have can do justice to what I have to say . "

One bank employee testified that Shakur was one of the bank robbers , but three other bank employees (including two tellers) testified that they were uncertain . The prosecution showed surveillance photos of four of the six alleged robbers , contending that one of them was Shakur wearing a wig . Shakur was forcibly subdued and photographed by the FBI on the judge 's order , after having refused to cooperate , believing that the FBI would use photo manipulation ; a subsequent judge determined that the manners in which the photos were obtained violated Shakur 's rights and ruled the new photos inadmissible . In her autobiography , Shakur recounts being beaten , choked , and kicked on the courtroom floor by five marshals , as Williams narrated the events to ensure they would appear on the court record . Shortly after deliberation began , the jury asked to see all the photographic exhibits taken from the surveillance footage . The jury determined that a widely circulated FBI photo allegedly showing Shakur participating in the robbery was not her .

Shakur was acquitted after seven hours of jury deliberation on January 16 , 1976 , and was immediately remanded back to New Jersey for the Turnpike trial . The actual transfer took place on January 29 . She was the only one of the six suspects in the robbery to be brought to trial . Andrew Jackson and two others indicted for the same robbery pleaded guilty ; Jackson was sentenced to five years in prison and five years ' probation ; another was shot and killed in a gun fight in Florida on December 31 , 1971 , and the last remained at large at the time of Shakur 's acquittal .

= = = Turnpike shootout retrial = = =

By the time Shakur was retried in 1977 , Acoli had already been convicted of the murder of Foerster (on the theory that he fired the bullets) , and a total of 289 articles had been published in the local press relating to the various crimes with which Shakur had been accused . Shakur 's trial , along with Acoli 's , would end up costing Middlesex County an estimated \$ 1 million .

Shakur again attempted to remove the trial to federal court . The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey denied the petition and also denied Shakur an injunction against the holding of trial proceedings on Fridays (the Muslim Sabbath) . An en banc panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit affirmed .

The nine @-@ week trial was widely publicized , and was even reported on by the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) . On March 25 , 1977 , back in Middlesex County , Shakur was convicted as an accomplice in the murders of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster and Zayd Shakur and possession of weapons , as well as of assault and attempted murder of Harper . During the trial , hundreds of civil rights campaigners demonstrated outside of the Middlesex County courthouse each day .

Following the 13 @-@ minute opening statement by Edward J. Barone , the first assistant Middlesex County prosecutor (directing the case for the state) , William Kunstler (the chief of Shakur 's defense staff) moved immediately for a mistrial , calling the eight @-@ count grand jury indictment " adversary proceeding solely and exclusively under the control of the prosecutor , " whom Kunstler accused of " improper prejudicial remarks " ; Judge Theodore Appleby , noting the

frequent defense interruptions that had characterized the previous days ' jury selection , denied the motion . The prosecution contended that Shakur shot and killed her companion , Zayd Shakur , and " executed " Trooper Foerster with his own weapon .

The next day , the jury listened to State Police radio tapes while being provided with a printed transcript , an arrangement that resulted from " hours of haggling " between the defense and prosecution . The " climax " of the tape came when Trooper Ronald Foster , the State Police radio operator , shouted into his microphone " They just shot Harper ! Be on the lookout for this car ! " and " It is a Pontiac . It 's got one tail light " after the wounded Harper entered into the administration building near the site of the shootout . As the tapes were played , Shakur was seated " calmly and without apparent concern " wearing a yellow turban and brightly colored floor @-@ length dress over a white turtleneck sweater .

On February 23 , Shakur 's attorneys filed papers asking Judge Appleby to subpoena FBI Director Clarence Kelley , Senator Frank Church and other federal and New York law enforcement officials to testify about the Counter Intelligence Program , which they alleged was designed to harass and disrupt black activist organizations . Kunstler had previously been successful in subpoenaing Kelley and Church for the trials of American Indian Movement (AIM) members charged with murdering FBI agents . The motion (argued March 2) ? which also asked the court to require the production of memos , tapes , documents , and photographs of alleged COINTELPRO involvement from 1970 to 1973 ? was denied .

Shakur herself was called as a witness on March 15 , the first witness called by the defense ; she denied shooting either Harper or Foerster , and also denied handling a weapon during the incident . She was questioned by her own attorney , Stuart Ball , for under 40 minutes , and then cross @-@ examined by Barone for less than two hours (see the Witnesses section below) . Ball 's questioning ended with the following exchange :

" On that night of May 2 [n] d , did you shoot , kill , execute or have anything to do with the death of Trooper Werner Foerster ? "

" No . "

" Did you shoot or assault Trooper James Harper ? "

" No . "

Under cross @-@ examination , Shakur was unable to explain how three magazines of ammunition and 16 live shells had gotten into her shoulder bag ; she also admitted to knowing that Zayd Shakur carried a gun at times , and specifically to seeing a gun sticking out of Acoli 's pocket while stopping for supper at a Howard Johnson 's restaurant shortly before the shooting . Shakur admitted to carrying an identification card with the name " Justine Henderson " in her billfold the night of the shootout , but denied using any of the aliases on the long list that Barone proceeded to read .

= = = Defense attorneys = = = =

Shakur 's defense attorneys were William Kunstler (the chief of Shakur 's defense staff) , Stuart Ball , Robert Bloom , Raymond A. Brown , Stanley Cohen (who died of unknown causes early on in the Turnpike trial) , Lennox Hinds , Florynce Kennedy , Louis Myers , Laurence Stern , and Evelyn Williams , Shakur 's aunt . Of these attorneys , Kunstler , Ball , Cohen , Myers , Stern and Williams appeared in court for the turnpike trial . Kunstler became involved in Shakur 's trials in 1975 , when contacted by Williams , and commuted from New York City to New Brunswick every day with Stern .

Her attorneys , in particular Lennox Hinds , were often held in contempt of court , which the National Conference of Black Lawyers cited as an example of systemic bias in the judicial system . The New Jersey Legal Ethics Committee also investigated complaints against Hinds for comparing Shakur 's murder trial to " legalized lynching " undertaken by a " kangaroo court . " Hinds ' disciplinary proceeding reached the U.S. Supreme Court in *Middlesex County Ethics Committee v. Garden State Bar Ass 'n* (1982) . According to Kunstler 's autobiography , the sizable contingent of New Jersey State Troopers guarding the courthouse were under strict orders from their commander , Col. Clinton Pagano , to completely shun Shakur 's defense attorneys .

Judge Appleby also threatened Kunstler with dismissal and contempt of court after he delivered an

October 21 , 1976 speech at nearby Rutgers University that in part discussed the upcoming trial , but later ruled that Kunstler could represent Shakur . Until obtaining a court order , Williams was forced to strip naked and undergo a body search before each of her visits with Shakur ? during which Shakur was shackled to a bed by both ankles . Judge Appleby also refused to investigate a burglary of her defense counsel 's office that resulted in the disappearance of trial documents , amounting to half of the legal papers related to her case . Her lawyers also claimed that their offices were bugged .

Tensions and dissension existed among the members of the defense team . Evelyn Williams felt that she was a victim of male prejudice stating that " for the second time in (her) legal career (she) became aware of the disdain with which men perceive women . " She expressed " amazement and contempt " for the actions of her fellow lawyers as she watched their " infighting for center stage " during the trial . Other members of the team were concerned that Williams was overly aggressive during her sole cross @-@ examination to the point of passing her notes that read , in part , " You 're antagonizing the jury " and " Shut up and sit down . "

= = = = Witnesses = = = =

Sundiata Acoli , Assata Shakur , Trooper Harper , and a New Jersey Turnpike driver who saw part of the incident were the only surviving witnesses . Acoli did not testify or make any pre @-@ trial statements , nor did he testify in his own trial or give a statement to the police . The driver traveling north on the turnpike testified that he had seen a State Trooper struggling with a Black man between a white vehicle and a State Trooper car , whose revolving lights illuminated the area .

Shakur testified that Trooper Harper shot her after she raised her arms to comply with his demand . She said that the second shot hit her in the back as she turned to avoid it , and that she fell onto the road for the duration of the gunfight before crawling back into the backseat of the Pontiac ? which Acoli drove 5 miles (8 km) down the road and parked . She testified that she remained there until State Troopers dragged her onto the road .

Trooper Harper 's official reports state that after he stopped the Pontiac , he ordered Acoli to the back of the vehicle for Trooper Foerster ? who had arrived on the scene ? to examine his driver 's license . The reports then state that after Acoli complied , and as Harper was looking inside the vehicle to examine the registration , Trooper Foerster yelled and held up an ammunition magazine as Shakur simultaneously reached into her red pocketbook , pulled out a nine @-@ millimeter weapon and fired at him . Trooper Harper 's reports then state that he ran to the rear of his car and shot at Shakur who had exited the vehicle and was firing from a crouched position next to the vehicle .

Under cross @-@ examination at both Acoli and Shakur 's trials , Trooper Harper admitted to having lied in these reports and in his Grand Jury testimony about Trooper Foerster yelling and showing him an ammunition magazine , about seeing Shakur holding a pocketbook or a gun inside the vehicle , and about Shakur shooting at him from the car . Trooper Harper retracted his previous statements and said that he had never seen Shakur with a gun and that she did not shoot him .

= = = = Jury = = = =

A total of 408 potential jurors were questioned during the voir dire , which concluded on February 14 . All of the 15 jurors ? ten women and five men ? were white , and most were under thirty years old . Five jurors had personal ties to State Troopers (one girlfriend , two nephews , and two friends) . A sixteenth female juror was removed before the trial formally opened when it was determined that Sheriff Joseph DeMarino of Middlesex County , while a private detective several years earlier , had worked for a lawyer who represented the juror 's husband . Judge Appleby repeatedly denied Kunstler 's requests for DeMarino to be removed from his responsibilities for the duration of the trial " because he did not divulge his association with the juror . "

One prospective juror was dismissed for reading Target Blue , a book by Robert Daley , a former New York City Deputy Police Commander , which dealt in part with Shakur and had been left in the

jury assembly room . Before the jury entered the courtroom , Judge Appleby ordered Shakur 's lawyers to remove a copy of Roots : The Saga of an American Family by Alex Haley from a position on the defense counsel table easily visible to jurors . The Roots TV miniseries adapted from the book and shown shortly before the trial was believed to have evoked feelings of " guilt and sympathy " with many white viewers .

Shakur 's attorneys sought a new trial on the grounds that one jury member , John McGovern , had violated the jury 's sequestration order . Judge Appleby rejected Kunstler 's claim that the juror had violated the order . McGovern later sued Kunstler for defamation ; Kunstler eventually publicly apologized to McGovern and paid him a small settlement . Additionally , in his autobiography , Kunstler alleged that he later learned from a law enforcement agent that a New Jersey State Assembly member had addressed the jury at the hotel where they were sequestered , urging them to convict Shakur .

Due to the high security of the trial and the sequestration , Shakur 's trial , along with Acoli 's , cost Middlesex County an estimated \$ 1 million combined . In September 1977 , New Jersey Governor Brendan Byrne vetoed a bill to give the Morris County sheriff \$ 7 @, @ 491 for overtime expenses incurred in guarding Shakur 's jury .

= = = = Medical evidence = = = =

A key element of Shakur 's defense was medical testimony meant to demonstrate that she was shot with her hands up and that she would have been subsequently unable to fire a weapon . A neurologist testified that the median nerve in Shakur 's right arm was severed by the second bullet , making her unable to pull a trigger . Neurosurgeon Dr. Arthur Turner Davidson , Associate Professor of Surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine , testified that the wounds in her upper arms , armpit and chest , and severed median nerve that instantly paralyzed her right arm , would only have been caused if both arms were raised , and that to sustain such injuries while crouching and firing a weapon (as described in Trooper Harper 's testimony) " would be anatomically impossible . "

Davidson based his testimony on an August 4 , 1976 examination of Shakur and on X @-@ rays taken immediately after the shootout at Middlesex General Hospital . Prosecutor Barone questioned whether Davidson was qualified to make such a judgment 39 months after the injury ; Barone proceeded to suggest (while a female Sheriff 's attendant acted out his suggestion) that Shakur was struck in the right arm and collar bone and " then spun around by the impact of the bullet so an immediate second shot entered the fleshy part of her upper left arm " to which Davidson replied " Impossible . "

Dr. David Spain , a pathologist from Brookdale Community College , testified that her bullet scars as well as X @-@ rays supported her claim that her arms were raised , and that there was " no conceivable way " the first bullet could have hit Shakur 's clavicle if her arm was down .

Judge Appleby eventually cut off funds for any further expert defense testimony . Shakur , in her autobiography , and Williams , in Inadmissible Evidence , both claim that it was difficult to find expert witnesses for the trial . Not only because of the financial expense , but also because most forensic and ballistic specialists declined on the grounds of a conflict of interest when approached because they routinely performed such work for law enforcement officials .

= = = = Other evidence = = = =

Neutron activation analysis administered after the shootout showed no gunpowder residue on Shakur 's fingers ; her fingerprints were not found on any weapon at the scene , according to forensic analysis performed at the Trenton , New Jersey crime lab and the FBI crime labs in Washington , D.C. According to tape recordings and police reports made several hours after the shoot @-@ out , when Harper returned on foot to the administration building 200 yards (183 m) away , he did not report Foerster 's presence at the scene ; no one at headquarters knew of Foerster 's involvement in the shoot @-@ out until his body was discovered beside his patrol car ,

more than an hour later .

= = = Conviction and sentencing = = =

On March 24 , the jurors listened for 45 minutes to a rereading of testimony of the State Police chemist regarding the blood found at the scene , on the LeMans , and Shakur 's clothing . That night , the second night of jury deliberation , the jury asked Judge Appleby to repeat his instructions regarding the four assault charges 30 minutes before retiring for the night , which led to speculation that the jury had decided in Shakur 's favor on the remaining charges , especially the two counts of murder . Appleby reiterated that the jury must consider separately the four assault charges (atrocious assault and battery , assault on a police officer acting in the line of duty , assault with a deadly weapon , and assault with intent to kill) , each of which carried a total maximum penalty of 33 years in prison . The other charges were : first @-@ degree murder (of Foerster) , second @-@ degree murder (of Zayd Shakur) , illegal possession of a weapon , and armed robbery (related to Foerster 's service revolver) . The jury also asked Appleby to repeat the definitions of " intent " and " reasonable doubt . "

Shakur was convicted on all eight counts : two murder charges , and six assault charges . The prosecution did not need to prove that Shakur fired the shots that killed either Trooper Foerster or Zayd Shakur : being an accomplice to murder carries an equivalent life sentence under New Jersey law . Upon hearing the verdict , Shakur said ? in a " barely audible voice " ? that she was " ashamed that I have even taken part in this trial " and that the jury was " racist " and had " convicted a woman with her hands up . " Judge Appleby told the court attendants to " remove the prisoner " and Shakur replied : " the prisoner will walk away on her own feet . " After Joseph W. Lewis , the jury foreman , read the verdict , Kunstler asked that the jury be removed before alleging that one juror had violated the sequestration order (see above) .

At the post trial press conference Kunstler blamed the verdict on racism stating that " the white element was there to destroy her . " When asked by a reporter that if that were the case why did it take the jury 24 hours to reach a verdict Kunstler replied , " That was just a pretense . " A few minutes later the prosecutor Barone disagreed with Kunstler 's assessment saying the trial 's outcome was decided " completely on the facts . "

At Shakur 's sentencing hearing on April 25 , Appleby sentenced her to 26 to 33 years in state prison (10 to 12 for the four counts of assault , 12 to 15 for robbery , 2 to 3 for armed robbery , plus 2 to 3 for aiding and abetting the murder of Foerster) , to be served consecutively with her mandatory life sentence . However , Appleby dismissed the second @-@ degree murder of Zayd Shakur , as the New Jersey Supreme Court had recently narrowed the application of the law . Appleby finally sentenced Shakur to 30 days in the Middlesex County Workhouse for contempt of court , concurrent with the other sentences , for refusing to rise when he entered the courtroom . To become eligible for parole , Shakur would have had to serve a minimum of 25 years , which would have included her four years in custody during the trials .

= = = Nelson murder dismissal = = =

In October 1977 , New York State Superior Court Justice John Starkey dismissed murder and robbery charges against Shakur related to the death of Richard Nelson during a December 28 , 1972 , hold @-@ up of a Brooklyn social club , ruling that the state had delayed too long in bringing her to trial , saying " People have constitutional rights , and you can 't shuffle them around . " The case was delayed in being brought to trial as a result of an agreement between the Governors of New York and New Jersey as to the priority of the various charges against Shakur . Three other defendants were indicted in relation to the same holdup : Melvin Kearney , who died in 1976 from an eight @-@ floor fall while trying to escape from the Brooklyn House of Detention , Twymon Myers , who was killed by police while a fugitive , and Andrew Jackson , the charges against whom were dismissed when two prosecution witnesses could not identify him in a lineup .

= = = Attempted robbery dismissal = = =

On November 22 , 1977 , Shakur pleaded not guilty to an attempted armed robbery indictment stemming from the 1971 incident at the Statler Hilton Hotel . Shakur was accused of attempting to rob a Michigan man staying at the hotel of \$ 250 of cash and personal property . During the incident Shakur was shot in the stomach and subsequently arrested , booked , and released on bail . The prosecutor was C. Richard Gibbons . The charges were dismissed without trial .

= = Imprisonment = =

After the Turnpike shootings , Shakur was imprisoned in New Jersey State Reception and Correction center in Yardville , Burlington County , New Jersey and later moved to Rikers Island Correctional Institution for Women in New York City where she was kept in solitary confinement for 21 months . Shakur 's only daughter , Kakuya Shakur , was conceived during her trial and born on September 11 , 1974 in the " fortified psychiatric ward " at Elmhurst General Hospital in Queens , where Shakur stayed for a few days before being returned to Rikers Island . In her autobiography , Shakur claims that she was beaten and restrained by several large female officers after refusing a medical exam from a prison doctor shortly after giving birth . While imprisoned on Rikers Island , Shakur filed a § 1983 suit related to the conditions of her confinement ; she was unsuccessful in persuading the federal courts to order that the legal aid paralegals assisting in her claim be granted attorney @-@ like visitation rights .

After a bomb threat was made against Judge Appleby , Sheriff Joseph DeMarino lied to the press about the exact date of her transfer to Clinton Correctional Facility for Women for security reasons . She was also transferred from the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women to a special area staffed by women guards at the Yardville Youth Correction and Reception Center in New Jersey , where she was the only female inmate , for " security reasons . " When Kunstler first took on Shakur 's case (before meeting her) , he described her basement cell as " adequate , " which nearly resulted in his dismissal as her attorney . On May 6 , 1977 , Judge Clarkson Fisher , of the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey , denied Shakur 's request for an injunction requiring her transfer from the all @-@ male facility to Clinton Correctional Facility for Women ; the Third Circuit affirmed .

On April 8 , 1978 , Shakur was transferred to Alderson Federal Prison Camp in Alderson , West Virginia where she met Puerto Rican nationalist Lolita Lebrón and Mary Alice , a Catholic nun , who introduced Shakur to the concept of liberation theology . At Alderson , Shakur was housed in the Maximum Security Unit , which also contained several members of the Aryan Sisterhood as well as Sandra Good and Lynette " Squeaky " Fromme , followers of Charles Manson .

On March 31 , 1978 , after the Maximum Security Unit at Alderson was closed , Shakur was transferred to the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey . According to her attorney Lennox Hinds , Shakur " understates the awfulness of the condition in which she was incarcerated , " which included vaginal and anal searches . Hinds argues that " in the history of New Jersey , no woman pretrial detainee or prisoner has ever been treated as she was , continuously confined in a men 's prison , under twenty @-@ four @-@ hour surveillance of her most intimate functions , without intellectual sustenance , adequate medical attention , and exercise , and without the company of other women for all the years she was in custody . "

Shakur was identified as a political prisoner as early as October 8 , 1973 by Angela Davis , and in an April 3 , 1977 , New York Times advertisement purchased by the Easter Coalition for Human Rights . An international panel of seven jurists representing the United Nations Commission on Human Rights concluded in 1979 that her treatment was " totally unbefitting any prisoner . " Their investigation , which focused on alleged human rights abuses of political prisoners , cited Shakur as " one of the worst cases " of such abuses and including her in " a class of victims of FBI misconduct through the COINTELPRO strategy and other forms of illegal government conduct who as political activists have been selectively targeted for provocation , false arrests , entrapment , fabrication of evidence , and spurious criminal prosecutions . " Amnesty International , however , did not regard

Shakur as a former political prisoner .

= = Escape = =

On November 2 , 1979 she escaped the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women in New Jersey , when three members of the Black Liberation Army visiting her drew concealed .45 @-@ caliber pistols , seized two guards as hostages and commandeered a prison van . The van escaped through an unfenced section of the prison into the parking lot of a state school for the handicapped , 1 @.@ 5 miles (2 km) away , where a blue @-@ and @-@ white Lincoln and a blue Mercury Comet were waiting . No one was injured during the prison break , including the guards held as hostages who were left in the parking lot . Her brother , Mutulu Shakur , Silvia Baraldini , former Panther Sekou Odinga , and Marilyn Buck were charged with assisting in her escape ; Ronald Boyd Hill was also held on charges related to the escape . In part for his role in the event , Mutulu was named on July 23 , 1982 as the 380th addition to the FBI 's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list , where he remained for the next four years until his capture in 1986 . State correction officials disclosed in November 1979 that they had not run identity checks on Shakur 's visitors and that the three men and one woman who assisted in her escape had presented false identification to enter the prison 's visitor room , before which they were not searched . Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck were convicted in 1988 of several robberies as well as the prison escape .

At the time of the escape , Kunstler had just started to prepare her appeal . After her escape , Shakur lived as a fugitive for several years . The FBI circulated wanted posters throughout the New York ? New Jersey area ; her supporters hung " Assata Shakur is Welcome Here " posters in response . In New York , three days after her escape , more than 5 @,@ 000 demonstrators organized by the National Black Human Rights Coalition carried signs with the same slogan . The image of Shakur on the wanted posters featured a wig and blurred black @-@ and @-@ white features (pictured right) .

For years after Shakur 's escape , the movements , activities , and phone calls of her friends and relatives ? including her daughter walking to school in upper Manhattan ? were monitored by investigators in an attempt to ascertain her whereabouts . In July 1980 , FBI director William Webster said that the search for Shakur had been frustrated by residents ' refusal to cooperate , and a New York Times editorial opined that the department 's commitment to " enforce the law with vigor ? but also with sensitivity for civil rights and civil liberties " had been " clouded " by an " apparently crude sweep " through a Harlem building in search of Shakur . In particular , one pre @-@ dawn April 20 , 1980 raid on 92 Morningside Avenue , during which FBI agents armed with shotguns and machine guns broke down doors , and searched through the building for several hours , while preventing residents from leaving , was seen by residents as having " racist overtones . " In October 1980 , New Jersey and New York City Police denied published reports that they had declined to raid a Bedford @-@ Stuyvesant , Brooklyn building where Shakur was suspected to be hiding for fear of provoking a racial incident .

= = Political asylum in Cuba = =

Shakur fled to Cuba by 1984 ; in that year she was granted political asylum in that country . The Cuban government paid approximately \$ 13 a day toward her living expenses . In 1985 she was reunited with her daughter , Kakuya , who had been raised by Shakur 's mother in New York .

In an open letter , Shakur has called Cuba " One of the Largest , Most Resistant and Most Courageous Palenques (Maroon Camps) that has ever existed on the Face of this Planet . " She also referred to herself as a " 20th century escaped slave . " Shakur is also known to have worked as an English @-@ language editor for Radio Havana Cuba .

= = = Books = = =

In 1987 , she published Assata : An Autobiography , which was written in Cuba . Her autobiography

has been cited in relation to critical legal studies and critical race theory . The book does not give a detailed account of the events on the New Jersey Turnpike , except saying that the jury " Convicted a woman with her hands up ! " It gives an account of her life beginning with her youth in the South and New York . Shakur challenges traditional styles of literary autobiography and offers the public a perspective on her life that is not easily accessible to the public . The book was published by Lawrence Hill & Company in the United States and Canada but the copyright is held by Zed Books Ltd. of London due to " Son of Sam " laws , which restrict who can receive profits from a book . In the six months preceding the publications of the book , Evelyn Williams , Shakur 's aunt and attorney , made several trips to Cuba and served as a go @-@ between with Hill .

In 1993 , she published a second book , Still Black , Still Strong , with Dhoruba bin Wahad and Mumia Abu @-@ Jamal .

= = = Extradition attempts = = =

In 1997 , Carl Williams , the superintendent of the New Jersey State Police , wrote a letter to Pope John Paul II asking him to raise the issue of Shakur 's extradition during his talks with President Fidel Castro . During the pope 's visit to Cuba in 1998 , Shakur agreed to an interview with NBC journalist Ralph Penza . Shakur later published an extensive criticism of the NBC segment , which inter @-@ spliced footage of Trooper Foerster 's grieving widow with an FBI photo connected to a bank robbery of which Shakur had been acquitted . On March 10 , 1998 New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman asked Attorney General Janet Reno to do whatever it would take to return Shakur from Cuba . Later in 1998 , U.S. media widely reported claims that the United States State Department had offered to lift the Cuban embargo in exchange for the return of 90 U.S. fugitives , including Shakur .

In September 1998 , the United States Congress passed a non @-@ binding resolution asking Cuba for the return of Shakur as well as 90 fugitives believed by Congress to be residing in Cuba ; House Concurrent Resolution 254 passed 371 ? 0 in the House and by unanimous consent in the Senate . The Resolution was due in no small part to the lobbying efforts of Governor Whitman and New Jersey Representative Bob Franks . Before the passage of the Resolution , Franks stated : " This escaped murderer now lives a comfortable life in Cuba and has launched a public relations campaign in which she attempts to portray herself as an innocent victim rather than a cold @-@ blooded murderer . "

In an open letter to Castro , chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Representative Maxine Waters of California later explained that many members of the Caucus (including herself) were against Shakur 's extradition but had mistakenly voted for the bill , which was placed on the accelerated suspension calendar , generally reserved for non @-@ controversial legislation . In the letter , Waters explained her opposition , calling COINTELPRO " illegal , clandestine political persecution . "

On May 2 , 2005 , the 32nd anniversary of the Turnpike shootings , the FBI classified her as a domestic terrorist , increasing the reward for assistance in her capture to \$ 1 million , the largest reward placed on an individual in the history of New Jersey . New Jersey State Police superintendent Rick Fuentes said " she is now 120 pounds of money . " The bounty announcement reportedly caused Shakur to " drop out of sight " after having previously lived relatively openly (including having her home telephone number listed in her local telephone directory) .

New York City Councilman Charles Barron , a former Black Panther , has called for the bounty to be rescinded . The New Jersey State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation each still have an agent officially assigned to her case . Calls for Shakur 's extradition increased following Fidel Castro 's transfer of presidential duties ; in a May 2005 television address , Castro had called Shakur a victim of racial persecution , saying " they wanted to portray her as a terrorist , something that was an injustice , a brutality , an infamous lie . " In 2013 the FBI announced it had made Shakur the first woman on its list of most wanted terrorists . The reward for her capture and return was also doubled to \$ 2 million that year .

= = Cultural impact = =

A documentary film about Shakur , Eyes of the Rainbow , written and directed by Cuban filmmaker Gloria Rolando , appeared in 1997 . The official premiere of the film in Havana in 2004 was promoted by Casa de las Américas , the main cultural forum of the Cuban government . The National Conference of Black Lawyers and Mos Def are among the professional organizations and entertainers to support Assata Shakur ; The " Hands Off Assata " campaign is organized by Dream Hampton . Hip @-@ hop artist Common recorded a tribute to Shakur , " A Song for Assata , " on his album Like Water for Chocolate , 2000 , after traveling to Havana to meet with Shakur personally . Paris (" Assata 's Song " , in Sleeping with the Enemy , 1992) , Public Enemy (" Rebel Without A Pause " in It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back , 1988) , 2Pac (" Words of Wisdom " in 2Pacalypse Now , 1991) , Digital Underground (" Heartbeat Props " in Sons of the P , 1991) , The Roots (" The Adventures in Wonderland " in Illadelph Halflife , 1996) , Asian Dub Foundation (" Committed to Life " in Community Music , 2000) , Saul Williams (" Black Stacey " in Saul Williams , 2004) , Rebel Diaz (" Which Side Are You On ? " in Otro Guerrillero Mixtape Vol . 2 , 2008) , Lowkey (" Something Wonderful " in Soundtrack to the Struggle , 2011) , Murs (" Tale of Two Cities " in The Final Adventure , 2012) , Jay Z (" Open Letter Part II " in 2013) , Dignable Planets , The Underachievers and X @-@ Clan have recorded similar songs about Shakur . Shakur has been alternately termed a " rap music legend " or a " minor cause celebre . "

On December 12 , 2006 , the Chancellor of the City University of New York , Matthew Goldstein , directed City College 's president , Gregory H. Williams , to remove the " unauthorized and inappropriate " designation of the " Guillermo Morales / Assata Shakur Community and Student Center , " which was named by students in 1989 , when a student group won the right to use the lounge after a campus shutdown over proposed tuition increases . The decision resulted in a lawsuit from student and alumni groups . As of April 7 , 2010 , the presiding judge has ruled that the issues of students ' free speech and administrators ' immunity from suit " deserve a trial . "

In 1995 Borough of Manhattan Community College renamed a scholarship that had previously been named for Shakur , following controversy . In 2008 , Shakur was featured in a course on " African @-@ American heroes " ? along with figures such as Harriet Tubman , Sojourner Truth , John Henry , Malcolm X , and Angela Davis ? at Bucknell University . Her autobiography is studied together with those of Angela Davis and Elaine Brown , the only women activists of the Black Power movement who have published book @-@ length autobiographies . Rutgers University professor H. Bruce Franklin , who excerpts Shakur 's book in a class on Crime and Punishment in American Literature , calls her a " revolutionary fighter against imperialism . "

Shakur is still a notorious figure among New Jersey law enforcement officials . For example , black (now ex-) Trooper Anthony Reed sued the force , among other things , over posters of Shakur , altered to include Reed 's badge number , being hung in Newark barracks , an incident that Reed considered " racist in nature . " In contrast , according to Dylan Rodriguez , to many " U.S. radicals and revolutionaries " Shakur represents a " venerated (if sometimes fetishized) signification of liberatory desire and possibility . "

The largely Internet @-@ based " Hands Off Assata ! " campaign is coordinated by Chicago @-@ area Black Radical Congress activists .

In 2015 , hip @-@ hop artist Common was pulled from a commencement speech at New Jersey 's Kean University because of police complaints . The university rescinded the offer to have Common speak at the event after members of the State Troopers Fraternal Association of New Jersey voiced their anger over Common 's " A Song For Assata . "

In 2015 , Black Lives Matter co @-@ founder Alicia Garza writes : ? When I use Assata ? s powerful demand in my organizing work , I always begin by sharing where it comes from , sharing about Assata ? s significance to the Black Liberation Movement , what its political purpose and message is , and why it ? s important in our context . "

The Chicago Black activist group Assata 's Daughters is named in her honor .

= = Terrorist list = =

Assata Shakur was moved to the FBI 's Most Wanted Terrorists List on May 2 , 2013 , the 40th anniversary of New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster 's murder .