

MAY, 1970

29

*Dearest Angela,*

I'm thinking about you. I've done nothing else all day. This photograph that I have of you is not adequate. Do you recall what Eldridge said regarding pictures for the cell? Give Frances several color enlargements for me. This is the cruelest aspect of the prison experience. You can never understand how much I hate them for this, no one could, I haven't been able to gauge it myself.

Over this ten years I've never left my cell in the morning looking for trouble, never once have I initiated any violence. In each case where it was alleged, it was defense attack response to some aggression, verbal or physical. Perhaps a psychiatrist, a Western psychiatrist that is, could make a case against me for anticipating attacks. But I wasn't born this way. Perhaps this same psychiatrist would diagnose from the overreactions that I am not a very nice person. But again I refer you to the fact that I was born innocent and trusting. The instinct to survive and all that springs from it developed in me, as it is today out of necessity.

I am not a very nice person, I confess. I don't believe in such things as free speech when it's used to rob and defame me.

I don't believe in mercy or forgiveness or restraint. I've gone to great lengths to learn every dirty trick devised and have improvised some new ones of my own. I don't play fair, don't fight fair. As I think of this present situation, the things that happen all day, the case they've saddled me with, in retrospection of the aggregate injury—all now drawn against the background of this picture you've given me—no one will profit from this, sister. No one will ever again profit from our pain. This is the last treadmill I'll run. They created this situation. All that flows from it is their responsibility. They've created in me one, irate, resentful nigger—and it's building—to what climax? The nation's undertakers have grown wealthy on black examples, but I want you to believe in me, Angela. I'm going to make a very poor example, no one will profit from my immolation. When that day comes they'll have to bury ten thousand of their own with full military honors. They'll have earned it.

Do you sense how drunk this photograph has made me.

You've got it all, African woman. I'm very pleased, if you don't ask me for my left arm, my right eye, both eyes, I'll be very disappointed. You're the most powerful stimulus I could have.

From now on when you have books for me to read in preparing my motions and jury selection questions, send them through John Thorne, people's lawyer, he is less pressed. And I do want Lenin, Marx, Mao, Che, Giap, Uncle Ho, Nkrumah, and any Black Marxists. Mama has a list. Tell Robert to provide money for them, and always look for the pocket editions, all right? My father—you'll have to try to understand him. He'll be with me in the last days in spite of whatever he says and thinks now. I've told him that I love you, and I told him that if he respects me at all, and wants me to spare his neck at Armageddon, he must be kind to you.

I got a letter from him this evening wherein he called the pigs by their very accurate moniker—pigs—he'll be all right. I see your influence already. But back to the books. With each

load of heavy stuff throw in a reference book dealing with pure fact, figures, statistics, graphs for my further education. Also books on the personnel and structure of today's political and economic front. I am doing some serious theory work for you concerning the case, dedicated to Huey and Angela. If you understand what I want, let me know. Sister, it's been like being held incommunicado these last ten years. No one understood what I was attempting to do and to say. We belong among the righteous of the world. We are the most powerful. We are in the best position to do the people's work. To win will involve taking a chance, crawling on the belly, naming, numbering, infiltrating, giving up meaningless small comforts, readjusting some values. My life means absolutely nothing without positive control over the factors that determine its quality. If you understand, rush to send all that I've asked for. A load should come in each day. I've read it all, once anyway, but I need it now . . . and time has become very important. I want you to believe in me. I love you like a man, like a brother, and like a father. Every time I've opened my mouth, assumed by battle stance, I was trying in effect to say I love you, African—African woman. My protest has been a small one, something much more effective is hidden in my mind—believe in me Angela. This is one nigger who's got some sense and is not afraid to use it. If my enemies, your enemies, prove stronger, at least I want them to know that they made one righteous African man extremely angry. And that they've strained the patience of a righteous and loving people to the utmost.

I've stopped several times in this writing to exercise, to eat, and it has grown late. I want to get this off tonight. I must know as soon as you get this and the others. Are you sure about your mail? I can imagine that the CIA is reading all your mail before you get it and deciding what you should and shouldn't have. Big Brother. He is rather transparent. I have his number. I know he's a punk, he can't stop me.