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**Spotlighting the Egregious Injustice of Marissa Alexander:  
A Fictional Conversation Between Malcolm X and a Social Activist**

The following dialogue, inspired by an existing injustice, is an imagined conversation between 39-year-old Malcolm X and 42-year-old African-American social activist, Sabrina Wright. Wright is a member of the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign (FMNMC), a coalition of activists, organizations, and artists who seek the acquittal of Marissa Alexander. A 33-year-old African-American mother, Alexander was wrongfully convicted in 2012 of three counts of aggravated assault and sentenced to a harsh mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years for “standing her ground” as a victim of domestic violence in Florida. After spending 1,014 days in unjust confinement, Alexander was freed when an appeals court overturned her conviction. But the State Attorney in Florida’s Fourth Judicial Circuit Court, Angela Corey, is now trying to gain a second conviction of Alexander, whose second trial is scheduled to begin July 28, 2014.

The following imagined conversation takes place in May of 2014 at the Harlem headquarters of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, headed by Malcolm X:

**Malcolm X:** Aaah, good morning, Sister Wright! I’m very pleased to meet you. [They shake hands.] I’ve heard great things about your efforts on behalf of Sister Marissa Alexander.

**Social Activist:** Well, I’ve heard great things about you too, Brother Malcolm. And I want to thank you for agreeing to meet with me on such short notice. I honestly didn’t think this meeting was even possible a week ago. You are so gracious. . . .

**Malcolm X:** Your kind words are well received. But it is the most high who is the gracious one, Sister Wright. I’m nothing more than a flickering candle—that is, well, compared to one of the most high’s man suns that gloriously illuminate the cosmos. But have a seat in one of those chairs, which I purchased in Nairobi during my last trip to Kenya, and tell me how you want me to assist you in your efforts to get good ol’ Uncle Sam off the back of Sister Alexander. Give me a little background, too, about yourself, if you don’t mind.

**Social Activist:** Okay, then. . . . I guess I’ll begin by telling you how I became involved in the fight to liberate Marissa, and then I’ll get to what kind of assistance I need.

**Malcolm X:** That’ll be perfect.

**Social Activist:** Alright, well back in 1994, when I was a student at Florida State University, my then-boyfriend Vince, an immature and insecure football star, used to beat on me like a set of drums. This went on for nearly two years, but never once did I find the courage to tell anyone what was happening to me, let alone muster up the strength to defend myself. Vince hit me only on the body, making sure not to leave tell-tale signs that would let people know I was in an abusive relationship. One day, though, my big brother Devin showed up at my apartment right after I’d gotten beaten. I was crying hysterically, and when he seen me, he put two and two together. Him and Vince started fighting in the kitchen, and Vince was getting the best of my

brother when Devin grabbed a steak knife that was in the sink, and he stabbed Vince in the neck. The knife severed an artery, and Vince died in the ambulance on his way to the hospital.

**Malcolm X:** My goodness! This is so tragic, Sister Wright! So tragic. . . .

**Social Activist:** It definitely is. But what keeps me up late at night—my big brother ended up getting convicted of second-degree murder, and he’s still in prison today. I feel if I would have had the courage to stand up to my boyfriend—the same way Marissa Alexander had the courage to stand up to her abusive, estranged husband—I believe my brother would never have went to prison.

**Malcolm X:** Sister Wright, I understand why you feel that way. But by no means are you responsible for your brother being in prison.

**Social Activist:** Well, I suppose you are right. My mother has been telling me the same thing for years. . . . But when I first heard how Marissa was being prosecuted and vilified for defending herself against a man who had a documented history of beating her, I felt I had to reach out to her. As a woman, and as a human being, I just had to. Shortly afterwards, I became involved with the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign. And what brings me to your office today is to ask if you would be willing to speak out against the injustice in Marissa’s case at an upcoming press conference scheduled in two weeks, right before the start of her second trial on July 28<sup>th</sup>?

**Malcolm X:** Sister Wright, I would speak at that press conference today if you needed me now. So before you leave make sure to write down all the logistical information I need to attend the press conference and give it to my secretary. . . . But as you know, I’m already familiar with the travesty of justice involving Sister Marissa Alexander. I’ve paid close attention to the state of Florida ever since they got away with helping Bush steal the presidency. In fact, I have an essay on my website that I co-authored with research scholar James Kilgore at the Center for African Studies at the University of Illinois. It speaks about the correlation of the injustice in the George Zimmerman trial, and the injustice of exonerated prisoners wrongfully sentenced to death. I mentioned Sister Alexander in that essay. . . . But, yes, it greatly disturbs me that Sister Alexander was convicted and sentenced to 20 years during her first trial. She simply fired a warning shot into a wall with a firearm registered in her name. Thankfully, by the grace of the most high, she was able to get her conviction overturned. The decision by the Florida State Attorney Angela Corey to retry Sister Alexander is downright shameful! And as you are surely aware, because of the enactment of a newly introduced mandatory minimum sentencing law, she is now facing up to 60 years. But I must tell you, Sister Wright, as deplorable a Sister Alexander’s situation is, I’m not surprised. As you and I both know, the prison-industrial complex is nothing more than a modernized version of the slave trade. And just as slavery of the past was brutal, so the modern version is brutal. And you can see right there in that legal book [Malcolm X points to a shelf of books], the culture of brutality has been legitimized by way of the Thirteenth Amendment of this country’s Constitution, which proclaims: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.” So, being that such ignorant words are tolerated by millions of United States citizens, I reiterate—no, I am not surprised by the pursuit of the legal lynching of Sister Marissa Alexander. I am not surprised, and furthermore, in my opinion, neither should anyone else in this country be surprised. As long as we live in a country that is unwilling to make the effort necessary to

eradicate obviously repressive and racist laws constructed to ensnare individuals like Sister Marissa Alexander—well, we are going to hear of countless instances of grave injustice.

**Social Activist:** Brother Malcolm, I agree with everything you've said. Nobody should be surprised. I felt that way a few weeks ago, when there was so much astonishment in response to the racist remarks of Donald Sterling, the embattled Los Angeles Clippers owner.

**Malcolm X:** Well, I am an optimist, Sister Wright, and God willing, one day we will live in a country devoid of the injustice that threatens the liberty of Sister Alexander. But for such a grand societal transformation to occur, the people of this country must find the courage, as well as the discipline, to speak truth to power. Now the vast majority are caught up in buffoonish issues such as the size of Kim Kardashian's posterior or choosing between Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus, or identifying the rapper with the most money. When our children are taking guns to school and shooting up entire classrooms, why are people consumed by headlines about TMZ and "The Wendy Williams Show"?

**Social Activist:** I wonder about these things too, Brother Malcolm, and I hope never have to hear another word about the elevator fight between Beyonce's sister and Jay Z. Enough already! But your appearance at our press conference is going to give a tremendous boost to our campaign. I just established ties with the FreeRyanWidmer.com campaign. Thousands of concerned people are fighting to free Widmer, a wrongfully convicted Ohio prisoner. If you don't object, I'd like to tell them about your commitment to the press conference and ask them to circulate it throughout their social media network.

**Malcolm X:** Sister Wright, I am all for anything that might liberate someone who is wrongfully imprisoned. Feel free, by all means, to forward the news to any website—just don't post it on anything connected with that ridiculous TMZ website. [Social activist and Malcolm X both laugh.]

**Social Activist:** No need to worry. I definitely won't do that. But I want to thank you again for coming on board. Marissa needs the support right now.

**Malcolm X:** No need to thank me. I'm fulfilling my life's purpose, and it's an honor to assist you on behalf of Sister Alexander. I would like, if I can find some kind of way, to help with trying to get your brother out of prison too.

**Social Activist:** Oh, my God! You are going to make me cry, Brother Malcolm. You are truly a wonderful, wonderful man. I am so blessed to have met you.

**Malcolm X:** The feeling is mutual, Sister Wright. . . . [Malcolm glances at his watch.] I have to bring this meeting to a close. I'm meeting a small delegation of labor activists, 15 Now, seeking a federal law to raise the minimum wage to 15 dollars an hour. I must not be late. Be sure to give my secretary your contact information. God willing, I will be in touch with you soon.

**Social Activist:** I sure will, Brother Malcolm. And you take care.

**Malcolm X:** Will do. And you take care too.

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**Jason Goudlock** is a progressive writer embedded in the struggle against the repressive United States prison industrial complex. If you would like to offer him support on his quest to attain justice for Ohio old-law prisoners, you can contact him at the following:

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Learn more about Jason Goudlock and his struggle for freedom at [freejasongoudlock.org](http://freejasongoudlock.org).