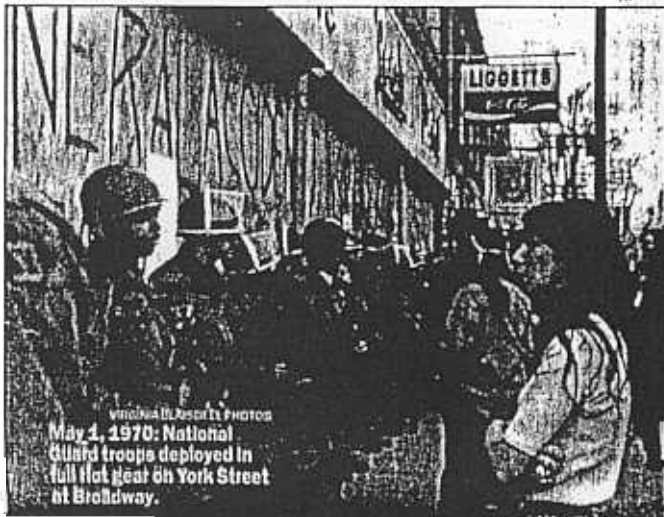
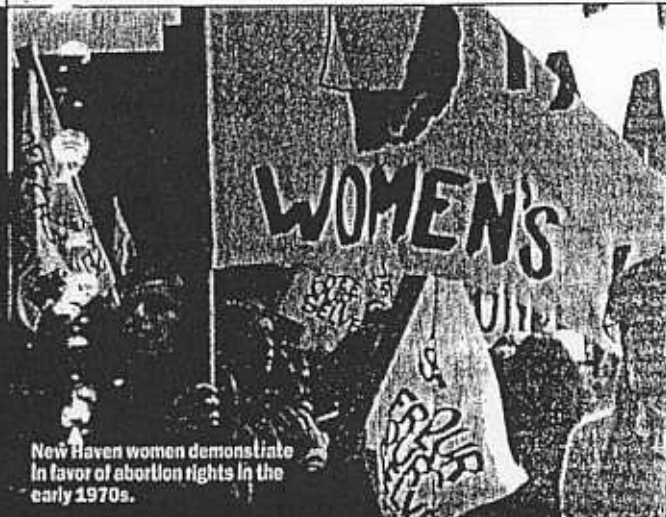


## IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO TODAY



Visual Resources Photos  
 May 1, 1970: National  
 Guard troops deployed in  
 full riot gear on York Street  
 at Broadway.



New Haven women demonstrate  
 in favor of abortion rights in the  
 early 1970s.

### Panther Frame-Ups

*Two decades after May Day, new evidence suggests involvement in the Black Panther murder that rocked New Haven • By Paul Bass*

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**A**s New Haven commemorates the 20th anniversary of the massive May Day civil-rights demonstration, new evidence suggests a possibly deadly role in the murder of a Black Panther.

Internal FBI documents demonstrate that the bureau's local office engaged in extensive forging of letters and other covert actions to disrupt the activities of black radicals—especially the Black Panther Party.

And several never-published FBI documents offer circumstantial evidence for a theory long held by some Panthers: that local Panthers killed fellow member Alex Rackley in 1969 because the FBI had leaked false information portraying Rackley as an informant. That murder led to a trial that turned the city upside down, focusing the nation's attention on whether blacks could receive a fair trial in the U.S. The controversy lured 15,000 protesters and the National Guard to the New Haven Green on May 1, 1970, for a tear-gas-filled weekend that shut down local businesses as well as Yale University classes.

The local FBI office refers questions on the matter to federal headquarters. A spokesman there, Nestor Michnyak, says, "You're not going to get any comment; it dates back too long ago. Most of the agents weren't even here then." He says the FBI documents will have to speak for themselves.

At the very least, documents obtained by the *Advocate* prove that subsequent to the Rackley murder, the FBI decided against planting similar false leaks about potential informants with West Coast Panthers because of

In addition, other FBI documents from the period offer an in-depth view of ways the bureau sought to deceive local newspaper readers, black merc

### Coming of Age

*Amid shifting definitions of feminism, the nation's second-oldest women's center marks a milestone • By Melinda Tuhus*

**L**isten up, all you females out there. When did you stop reacting to men's whistles and catcalls as compliments, and start considering them the rantings of sexist pigs?

Or do you still consider them a sign of your desirability?

Answer, it seems, may depend on your age.

Women who came of political age 20 years ago began to view whistles as an expression of sexism, the women's movement's paradigmatic slogan: "the personal is political."

In late-seventy was a heady time for the women's movement—a year of momentous personal and political upheaval for the women involved—and for others whose lives they touched. That year, the New Haven Women's Liberation Center was founded, and along with it, a movement. Last weekend the center held a 20th anniversary women's concert. Like other events planned to commemorate the anniversary, it evoked poignant memories for movement veterans of two decades of hard work: struggles within themselves over long-held beliefs, struggles with others resistant to change.

Women have come a long way, baby—in some respects. But the Equal Rights Amendment hasn't made it into the constitution. Women's right to abortion is more threatened than at any time since Roe v. Wade in 1973. Violence against women is more visible than ever. Today feminism itself is a dirty word in many circles. And old issues remain for feminists, like balancing priorities between social service work and social change work.

New Haven women say theirs is the second oldest continuously operating women's center in the country (the oldest is in Missoula, Mont.). In those 20 years the center has gone through feast and famine, outreach to the community and internal conflicts that threatened to negate the other heartfelt

# May Day

Continued from page 1

transpiring in their midst. New Haven's FBI office immersed itself in a disinformation mission to—in its own words—"undermine confidence" in black "leadership." Such language confirmed theories that sounded paranoid at the time when uttered by the surveilled activists themselves; today, a new generation of black activists in America's cities has begun advancing similar theories that white authorities seek to discredit black leaders.

The FBI's counterintelligence mission 20 years ago had its comic moments, like attempts to instruct agents in supposed radical black lingo in order to write and interpret convincing forgeries (see accompanying story, "How To Talk Black"). It had plenty of insidious moments. And it just may have had a deadly moment, too.

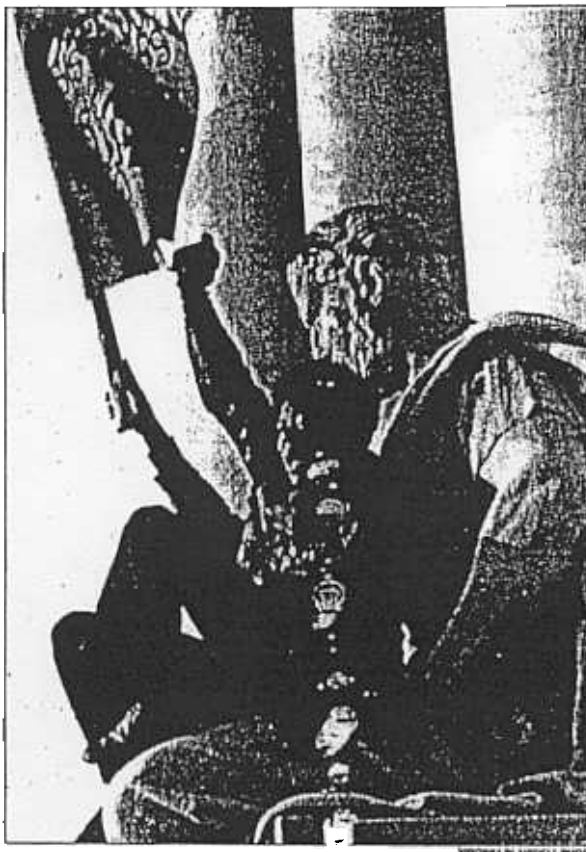
## A New Haven Rerun?

Beginning in 1977, the FBI agreed to release thousands upon thousands of internal documents about its effort to disrupt political activists. Called COINTELPRO (short for Counterintelligence Program), the effort relied on anonymous phone calls, forged letters, informants and other techniques to wreak internet havoc on anti-war and civil-rights groups. More than 100,000 pages of internal FBI COINTELPRO memos sit in filing cabinets in Cambridge, Mass., where researchers affiliated with the National Lawyers Guild have centralized the flood of intriguing factoids unearthed in lawsuits and reporters' Freedom of Information requests from across the country in an archive.

The memos led to definitive accounts of FBI dirty tricks in cities like Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. Network TV, metropolitan newspapers, special-interest journals, revealed those accounts to the nation. For the most part, the extensive dirty tricks in New Haven around the time have received scant mention, and no detailed account.

Sitting in the file cabinet, receiving no notice at all, have been memos from San Francisco and Las Vegas that referred to the New Haven incident in a suspicious light.

In one of them, dated April 22, 1971, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's office denied a request from the Las Vegas office to direct "an anonymous letter to the local BPP (Black Panther Party) chapter indicating that [name deleted], one of the leaders of the local chapter, is a police informant." Why? "Such action could possibly result in a situation similar to that which occurred in Connecticut in May, 1969, when Alex Rackley was tortured and killed by BPP. If the



allegation was believed."

A year earlier, the San Francisco office made a similar request, discussed in several memos.

A May 11, 1970, memo details a proposed "disruptive-disinformation operation" targeted against the national office of the Black Panther Party.

"Xerox copies of true documents, documents subtly incorporating false information, and entirely fabricated documents would be periodically anonymously mailed to the residence of a key Panther leader. These documents would be on the stationery and in the form used by the police department or by the FBI in disseminating information to the police..."

"An attempt would be made to give the Panther recipient the impression the documents were stolen from police files by a disgruntled police employee sympathetic to the Panthers."

That is the June 17 memo, the San Francisco office's special agent in charge directly refers to a New Haven memo dated 1970 as the basis for the bureau's opposition to "leaking information that an individual is an informant of the FBI. BPP history indicates they have dealt severely with suspected informants, even to the point of killing them."

A subsequent memo again refers to the proposal: "The proposal was based on the technique successfully used in the..."

...at which point a long black mark drawn by the FBI conceals the rest of the sentence. The paragraph ends by concluding that to "cast suspicion upon a BPP leader as an informant...could result in

the murder of the suspected Panther by his comrades."

Whether or not the FBI deliberately framed Rackley, it was pleased with the crisis which the murder case caused the Black Panthers. A September 3, 1969, 90-day progress summary from the New Haven office on the COINTELPRO program lists the case under the heading of "Tangible Results": "On the national level the arrest of [Bobby] SEALE has certainly disrupted the entire BPP organization and caused an additional drain of BPP funds." And locally, the memo observed, "the majority of the Black community and white community is not giving the Party any visible support. In short, they are apparently having to 'go it alone' without community assistance."

## Revisiting a Theory

To George Edwards, one of the Panthers jailed in the Rackley murder, the latest information merely confirms his long-held conviction that the FBI set up Rackley. "I've had a gut feeling about it from then until now," says Edwards, who has carried on his identity as an anti-apartheid activist in New Haven (and believes he is still under government surveillance). He believes law-enforcement agents spread the same rumors about him as about Rackley: his voluminous personal FBI file reveals that agents indeed considered him dangerous, listing him in their "Agitator Index," keeping watch over practically his every move. Edwards, too, was accused of being an informant at the time of the murder; he admits to briefly participating in beating Rackley during a pre-murder interrogation. A Panther forced him at gunpoint to participate in the beating against his will to implicate him in the crime, Edwards says.

"This material is entirely consistent with what people close the case have always believed," says local civil-rights attorney John Williams, who often represented the Panthers in criminal matters at the time.

Williams subsequently filed—and won a class-action lawsuit against illegal wiretaps of thousands of innocent New Haveners' phone conversations during the period. He expresses astonishment that the San Francisco and Las Vegas memos never appeared among the "careless and careless" documents the FBI released during the case. "If I had had those documents I would have added additional charges of dirty tricks against the FBI. We had only suspicions then, not evidence. I'm just absolutely shocked—not that they did it, but that I didn't get the documents."

"How else can you interpret [the memos] besides: 'We tried it, and it backfired?'" argues Chip Berlet, who has researched COINTELPRO and other intelligence agency abuses for 20 years. Berlet, secretary of the National Lawyers Guild's Civil Liberties Committee, dug out the memos from the archive for the Advocate. "If the FBI had evidence otherwise, they would have testified in the murder case that they knew Rackley was in fact a snitch."

Berlet notes that the FBI had successfully used the fake-informer technique decades

Continued on page 22

## MAKING PEACE WITH THE PAST

Two decades after he pulled the trigger on Alex Rackley, Warren Kimbro still has questions about the crime

The latest revelations about the FBI's possible role in New Haven's Black Panther murder case reopen old wounds in Warren Kimbro's heart.

You can't see the wounds. Kimbro, founder of New Haven's Black Panther Party chapter, keeps them concealed behind an outward gentleness that comes from having made his peace with his role in the Alex Rackley murder. For the most part.

"I always knew," he says softly, "that Alex was innocent." Even when Kimbro pulled the trigger, firing one of two shots that wasted the suspected informer. "The moment I pulled the trigger, I knew it was wrong. I felt like a piece of shit. All humanity drained out of me. I still pray for Alex's soul every day. I'd probably be crazy now if I didn't do that."

He was covering his own butt by participating in the interrogation and the murder, he says. Not that that excuses what he did.

The newest revelation—that the FBI planned to create a fake document accusing a San Francisco Panther of informing, then shucking the plan because of what happened with Panther Alex Rackley in New Haven—revives a burning sense deep in Kimbro's heart that the feds played a part in the murder. Not that that excuses what he did.

"My mistake was my own. But maybe I wouldn't have made that mistake if they weren't playing with someone's life."

Kimbro struggles with the words. He seems reluctant to reopen suppressed outrage for fear of backtracking on his acceptance of culpability—an acceptance that helped him move on to a productive life after four and a half years in the slammer.

"It's water over the dam," he says, "because I had no business being involved." And yet he can't help returning to the web of open-ended theories first woven in his cell at the Breakton Correctional Center, constructed of competing loose ends that to this day

remain unconnected because of missing information. "I still have lots of questions. The people who left town [the night of the murder] were supposed to take the murder weapon. Then the police came to my house the next night and ran right to the drawer and found the murder weapon—and I didn't even know it was there! Somebody had put it back. From the way they came in that night for the arrests, somebody had to know something. This thing was ill-conceived on everybody's part—the FBI and the Panthers. I lost a big chunk of my life."

Older, wiser, having long renounced violence, Kimbro at 54 still spends his days in New Haven's struggling Hill neighborhood working on the part of the program that made him proudest: helping to steer disadvantaged people toward opportunity. He has built a thriving program out of Project MORE, which helps ex-offenders and their families get back on their feet out of jail. To somehow make peace with the mistakes—to the extent possible—and get on with a productive life.

The way Warren Kimbro has.



ADVOCATE FILE PHOTO

Kimbro: "I had no business being involved."

## HOW TO TALK BLACK

An FBI glossary

Not just anyone can write or understand a convincing forgery of a Black Panther letter. You need to know the right slang, the correct amount of "grammatical errors to indicate the person writing has no formal education."

At least that's the advice dispensed in a Feb. 2, 1970, memorandum written by an agent in New Haven's FBI office. The memo described an anonymous letter the office prepared to forward from New Haven to the Black Panther Party's (BPP) national headquarters in San Francisco. The letter alleged that a New Haven member "is skimming money from BPP contributions and having sex relations with white girls."

"It is felt," the memo states, "this could cause dissent within ranks of BPP both in New Haven and possibly Boston."

The memo includes a glossary "to help clarify terminology." The glossary follows exactly as written, to be read with a constant "sic" in mind:

- "Dig the threads—Look at the clothing
- "On your main man—[name deleted] is wearing
- "When you blows in—on coming to town
- "Vamping aint my bag—an informant I am not
- "But [name deleted] is raking the scratch—He is taking BPP money
- "And play stud with the gray girls—having sexual relation with white girls
- "Dig it—Listen
- "We all is for one—BPP members are for BPP members, aka 'united'
- "But our man is a oreo—Black on the outside, white inside
- "He getting to be like a house nigger—Becoming [a] black that is allowed to live in as a white servant
- "Excuse—Because
- "All he hits on is—has intercourse
- "Gray leg—white girls
- "so who paying—BPP in paying for activities
- "He think we don't know what going down—we are aware of his activities
- "But we think he is in some deep shit—His action will be dealt with
- "Hung up—girl in love with [name deleted] but has gone unnoticed."

# TOWN & GOWN



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## May Day

Continued from page 8  
earlier with the Communist Party dividing leaders without sparking a murder. "I don't think they realized someone would get killed in the Panther case."

New Haven Police Chief Nicholas Pastore, who at the time investigated the Rackley murder, doesn't buy the theory. Pastore, too, believes Rackley was probably innocent. He argues that the Panthers invented the charge.

"The bureau didn't know Alex Rackley existed until after he was dead. He was a sacrificial lamb. It's sort of the way the Mafia works. They were creating their own code of conduct. The message goes out: This is the way we're going to deal

in a Feb. 26, 1971, 90-day status report on the COINTELPRO effort, the local office listed under "Tangible Results" the appearance of these two flyers inside "numerous black businesses." Crowded the next status report, "It is evident by the lack of support and attitude of the merchants and/or residents in the immediate area of the BPP that this measure has been highly successful."

Among other FBI disinformation tactics revealed in the files: •A huffy letter from a supposedly outraged Yale alum to the Yale administration complaining about the university's tolerance of Panthers in its midst. (The FBI cleaned up its diction for this one.)

•A similar letter, supposedly from an outraged parishioner, to officials of a church about a church person's "associations" with the



April 30, 1970: Merchants board up windows at Chapel Square Mall in anticipation of violence.

with this."

To Berlet and Williams, Pastore's argument reflects the paranoia law-enforcement officials harbored toward the tough-talking Panthers, some of whom had rough reputations but none of whom had actually been proved to instigate unprovoked violence.

One of the Panthers who actually shot Rackley, Warren Kimbro, believes both interpretations. Different members had different motives in the case, he says. Based on his own experience, before COINTELPRO documents came to light in the late '70s confirming his suspicions, he believed law-enforcement agencies were up to something with the Panthers.

### Creative Writing

Whatever the truth behind the specific Rackley accusation, bountiful documents from the era offer indisputable evidence that local FBI agents concocted plenty of fake missives designed to thwart the Panthers.

They did it at J. Edgar Hoover's prodding. A March 28, 1969, memo (two months before the Rackley murder) from the FBI director expressed impatience with the New Haven bureau. Referring to an earlier memo demanding proposals for "counterintelligence maneuvers aimed against the BPP," the document complains, "To date you have submitted no concrete recommendations under this program concerning the Black Panther Party, despite the fact this extremely dangerous organization is active in four cities in your Division" (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and Middletown).

In no time, the New Haven bureau began coughing up proposals with gusto. And getting approval. It sent an anonymous flyer to black merchants near a building the Panthers planned to turn into their local headquarters. Supposedly written by "A Concerned Merchant," the flyer urged business people to block the move.

The bureau drew an anonymous, detailed "Like It Is" flyer to counter each assertion of the Panthers' "Ten-Point Program." (Example: In response to Point Four, which called for decent housing, the anonymous author wrote, "The finance [sic] of the BPP is out of sight, yet dig the pads that are set up as headquarters.")

Panthers. The letter cast aspersions on the subject's patriotism and alleged Communist leanings.

•An anonymous letter to imprisoned Panther leader Bobby Seale claiming that party members no longer respected his leadership. (The annotated version in the FBI files begins: "Blood, [Black revolutionary word for close friend], don't think for a minute that there isn't a reason for your sacrifice, but now that we have Huey, a beautiful man, you are not needed as greatly to lead the party.") "Huey" was Huey Newton.

•Letters to newspaper editors, signed with fictitious names.

•Calls to reporters at "cooperative" media with anti-Panther information. The *New Haven Register* appeared on the list of such media. A November 1969 status report lists as a "tangible result" that the Human Relations Council of Greater New Haven singled out the *Register* for biased coverage preventing the Panthers from receiving a fair trial in the Rackley case. The memo concluded: "Through an established source, the 'New Haven Register' will continue to receive public source data."

•An anonymous letter to national Panther headquarters, allegedly by a BPP sympathizer in New Haven, "about supposedly questionable conduct by a Panther leader at a rally on the Green."

•A call to a Panther member, when he was out of the company of local leaders, criticizing an embattled local leader for "not relating" to the local situation and being more concerned with demonstrations with Yale and MIT white radicals.

•A handwritten letter to exiled Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers criticizing Huey Newton for spending too much time in a comfortable Yale dormitory suite. "Bureau suggests letter be signed 'Brothers in New Haven' and to include [sic] several misspellings and punctuation errors in order that letter appears more authentic."

•A plan to call in embarrassing questions to Huey Newton on a live Channel 8 call-in show.

As it turned out, Newton canceled the TV appearance. In this case, the FBI obviously didn't follow through on a plan. In other cases, it most certainly did.

# The Magic Bus



## How the "friendly face of authority" really kept the city cool

By Paul Bass

The Weathermen were coming to New Haven. If anyone could make the prophecy come true, they were the ones.

The prophecy: That New Haven would explode in the biggest political violence of the late '60s/early '70s. Crowds would converge by

the bus for a Mayday, 1970, rally to "Free Bobby" Seale, the Black Panther on trial for conspiracy to commit murder.

The Weathermen (actually, the group was officially called "Weatherman") had arranged for two of those buses to be parked along a line in Bob Dylan's "Homesick Subterranean Blues" about how "You don't need a

weatherman to know which way the wind blows." Weatherman was a violence-obsessed splinter of the more serious-minded Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), whose effectiveness had peaked earlier in the '60s. Shortly before Mayday, Weatherman members had sparked violence at a protest in Harvard. Now the group had chartered two buses to New Haven for the big demo.

But actually getting to New Haven would prove trickier than the group imagined.

That's because police in New Haven knew about their plans. Part of a national network of informants was spying on radical leaders under the umbrella of the FBI's COINTEL-PRO, or Counter-Intelligence Program. New Haven's cops had received word of the plans from Massachusetts.

New Haven Police Chief Jim Ahern brought the news to Henry "Sam" Chauncey, top aide to Yale President Kingman Brewster in charge of dealing with the impending Mayday mayhem.

"He said, 'The best thing is if they never get here,'" Chauncey recalls of his conversation with Ahern. "My first vision is of them getting assassinated."

Chauncey is laughing. He didn't really think Ahern meant assassination. But he wasn't sure what Ahern did mean. Ahern clued him in.

"He asked me if I had any money. Kingman had given me \$100,000 to do things we had to do."

Soon Chauncey was in Boston, talking to the bus company. He told company officials "who these people were." Then he asked whether Yale could substitute its own drivers for the company's drivers, and leave the



Chauncey: "Authority won. Not the old authority. A different kind of authority." Inset: Power envy: The National Guard came equipped with its full-sized model to the Green.

Weatherfolks stranded in the middle of nowhere.

At first the company balked, Chauncey says. Then it agreed on the terms that Yale buy insurance for the bus in case the Weathermen took out the rage reserved for New Haven on the vehicles instead. Yale bought the insurance.

Then, right before Mayday, the Weathermen boarded the buses. As the Yale-hired drivers reached Hopkinton—"the most barren place on the Massachusetts Turnpike"—the drivers stopped, Chauncey says. They got out. They popped the hood to one of the buses, pretended there was engine trouble. They took out part of the engine.

Along came a car that just happened to stop. Well, it didn't just happen to. It was another Yale-hired driver. The two bus drivers, keys and engine parts in hand, hopped into the car. They left the Weathermen stranded by the woods of Hopkinton.

"They wandered off into the woods. To the best of our knowledge, they never appeared in New Haven," Chauncey recalls. They left the buses alone.

The Magic Bus is just one of many stories of how Yale and New Haven authorities really kept New Haven violence-free that historic weekend 25 years ago. Listening to the full story—much of which is still just dribbling out 25 years later—demonstrates how Mayday, 1970, revealed both the promise and the limits

of Noblesse Oblige Liberalism.

Unlike the crooked Republicans who ran the White House, the violent thugs who ran other police departments across the country, or the petty power-strutting potentates at other universities, the barons of Yale and New Haven's liberal police chief gave the appearance of welcoming challenges to the established order.

As for more of their contempt elsewhere, they genuinely did allow room for the expression of burning dissent.

When New Haven did not explode on Mayday weekend, and then Kent State did in Ohio (when National Guardsmen shot dead four student protesters), the national press held up New Haven and Yale as models of tolerance. Chief Ahern held his officers back from beating on radicals. He "rapped" with street demonstrators. Yale's Kingman Brewster and his sidekick Chauncey opened the gates of their university to protesters, fed them granola, housed the yipping unshowered masses for free. In the end, a few itching-fingered National Guardsmen let loose some tear gas late at night. But overall New Haven had fewer arrests than on a typical, uneventful weekend. The only appreciable violence—the bombing of Yale's skating rink, an arson fire at a liberal political headquarters—probably came from the right, not the left-wing protesters.

That was half the story.

The other half first came to light in 1977. While gladhanding protesters, Chief Ahern was also overseeing the most intrusive

police-spying operation in America. He oversaw an illegal phone-wiretapping operation that had four taping machines going around the clock. Not only did New Haven receive the most outside money per capita of any American city to try to abolish poverty in the '50s and '60s. It also had, per capita, the most illegally-wiretapped citizenry. (Some would suggest a connection between those two facts.)

Ahern probably did have a sincere liberal streak in him; his 1972 book *Police in Trouble* calls for society to stop relying on police and force to settle more difficult social tensions (a resonant call in today's debate over crime and drugs). But Ahern also had another reason to fear radicals less than other police chiefs did. He was more on top of their movements.

Yale's Brewster, meanwhile, was a proud member of the Nixon White House enemies' list because of his outspoken liberalism. Just as Mayday approached, he declared that he sincerely doubted the ability of black revolutionaries to receive a fair trial in America. He opened Yale's doors to more minority students than ever before. In the minds of his detractors, he allowed a small contingent of Black Panthers, in town for only a few months, to shut down his Ivy League university for a week-long strike to call attention to the Seale trial.

Through special assistant Chauncey's close working relationship with police chief Ahern, Brewster also made savvy use of the New Haven police's first-rate intelligence.

Brewster and Ahern are both dead now. The only living member of the three-person working group is Chauncey. Others close to Ahern at the time, though, as well as contemporary chroniclers of Yale's approach to Mayday, confirm Chauncey's close personal and working relationships with both Brewster and Ahern.

Today Chauncey speaks candidly, without apology, of Liberalism's Mayday Triumph. In that triumph, he sees timeless lessons about the proper uses of authority, in contrast to the excesses of authority elsewhere in the country at the time.

"Our nation is going to be more and more divided again," he predicts. "The issue of how authority should be used is going to be a very big issue."

From his name, to his lineage, to his disarmingly likable manner, Henry "Sam" Chauncey oozes confidence with authority. His family was in this country from the beginning," he says. One ancestor was a Yale founder. Another served as Harvard's second president (Charles Chauncey, a "well-known radical religious thinker who got fired because he believed in religious freedom"). Sam's dad founded the Educational Testing Service, which basically sets the standards for judging who receives what kind of higher education, and thus, often admission to positions of power in society. Chauncey eventually became Secretary of Yale. Then he founded and headed a bio-tech incubator-research center in New Haven called Science Park. After that, he served as president of Gaylord Hospital. Today, as his 60th birthday approaches, he teaches at Yale's School of Epidemiology and Public Health, where he also runs a small program in health-care management.

Chauncey says Ahern greatly influenced Yale with his approach to preventing violence.

"Jim Ahern had a clear strategy. He let a crowd go anywhere they wanted and met no opposition unless they genuinely wanted to





break the law, like breaking into a store. What normally causes riots is rallying around individuals being beaten by the police, or being prevented from doing something they want to do.

Eventually Chauncey and Brewster would adopt with gusto Aher's "Give-In Principle": "At the points where pressure developed, you give in if there's no good reason to stand firm." The only good reason is violence.

So Brewster acceded to allowing professors to suspend classes during mayday week "strike," to welcoming protesters into Yale's mid-sts, to allying himself with what he considered legitimate social critiques of the radicals. Yale alumni, particularly, hated him for it; politicians from U.S. Sen. Thomas Dodd to Ed Marcus, then a Congressional candidate (today Connecticut State Democratic Chairman), called for McCarthy-style investigations of Brewster and for his resignation. More informed, level-headed critics among the university's conservative faculty and students feared Brewster compromised Yale's academic standards, neutrality and authority.

**A**s Brewster and Chauncey developed their version of the Give-In Principle, they arranged a secretive picnic lunch with Archibald Cox. At the time Cox was Chauncey's counterpart at Harvard. (Later he became famous as the special prosecutor in the Watergate scandal, who was fired after refusing to carry out Nixon's orders.)

They met in a field near the Public House in Sturbridge. They didn't want to be seen together. "In those days you didn't know... Your phone was tapped, your picture was taken," Chauncey recalls. Indeed, he and Brewster would test their phones by talking about fictitious plans to bring famous speakers to Yale. Inevitably, a local reporter or someone else would call soon after saying they'd "heard" that the famous person was coming to town.

And, indeed, Woolbridge Hall (the Yale's president's office) was collecting its own photos, too. For lunch that day, Chauncey and Brewster brought along wine, chicken, fruit and cheese packed by Mary Louise Brewster (Kingman's wife). "Archie" Cox, as Chauncey called him, brought large surveillance photos of the Weathermen and other protesters responsible for violence in Cambridge. Chauncey says he passed the photos along to Aher.

"The whole question that was going on was, what role is authority going to play? So many people were so worried about losing their authority that they asserted it when nothing was at stake. That was a mistake. We drew the line at violence," Chauncey says.

They added some fatherly—or one might say paternalistic—touches. A hot issue on campus in New Haven was whether Yale would

keep open the Phelps Gate, the entrance to the Old Campus courtyard across from the Green. Some feared that closing it would strand radicals fleeing tear gas from the National Guard troops sent by President Nixon. Chauncey claims that Brewster all along planned to allow the gates to stay open. But at first he said no. Each time protests reached a loud enough level, he agreed to open another portion of the gates, until he finally agreed to keep all of them wide open.

"There's nothing a child finds more frustrating than if a parent says, 'Go ahead and do it,'" Chauncey explains. "Crowds are like children."



Even though much of New Haven's black community was skeptical of the Panthers, it could relate to the group's charges of government repression. Local black volunteers worked with the Panthers to keep heads cool.

**W**hen he was arranging the Weathermen's fateful bus ride into the woods, Chauncey says, it didn't occur to him that he was breaking the law.

The Weathermen were not lying to him, he says. "These people also were not fooling around. They were into violence."

"I don't know the law. But let's assume I violated the law or the company violated the law. During those years, my philosophy was: People getting killed was a very serious thing. If you prevent some people from getting killed, that's justified."

"We had an enormous amount of sympathy for students and others who were challenging authority. We were not sure authority was right in this country," on a wide range of issues from the Vietnam War to males-only admission to elite schools, Chauncey says. "We were very sympathetic to the intelligent radicals, the Kurt Schmokes of the world. (Schmoke, a key black student leader at Yale at the time, is today mayor of Baltimore.) We had a responsibility to see buildings weren't burned down and people weren't killed. I was sympathetic to

the need for change. I didn't believe in everybody being in charge. I didn't think it could work."

To many radical protesters, who is allowed to be in charge cut to the heart of their disaffection with the American system.

One left writer, Bertram Gross, would soon coin the phrase the "friendly face of fascism" to describe the kind of limit-stretching—but still not limitless—liberalism displayed in New Haven on Mayday, 1970. Chauncey says he prefers the term "friendly face of authority."

"In a competition between authority and radicalism, this time

authority won," Chauncey concludes. "Not the old authority, the people Kingman and I disagreed with. Happily, from my perspective, it was a different kind of authority."

In context of what happened elsewhere in the country how Yale and New Haven drew the line doesn't completely bother some of their targets.

"A lot of of the people who were running the country would have sent [the Weathermen] here and waited for them with clubs," observes civil-rights attorney John Williams. Williams defended some of the Panthers. He also successfully sued New Haven on behalf of thousands of wiretap victims. "Given that everyone in power was a criminal, I'd rather be robbed by a fountain pen than a gun."

Kathleen Cleaver, then the communications secretary of the national Panthers, today a law professor at Emory University, also says Yale and New Haven look good compared to authorities elsewhere.

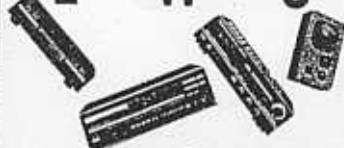
"They just derailed the wrong bus!" Cleaver adds, referring to new revelations about the Nixon White House's suspected complicity in the skating rink bombing. "They should have gotten John Dean's bus!"

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# Who Bombed New Haven?

By Paul Bass

New Haven will probably never solve the mystery of the bombing that nearly killed hundreds of people on Yale's campus 25 years ago this week, but it turns out that Yale's president pursued a high-profile suspect: The Nixon Administration.

After the smoke cleared from Mayday, Yale's Kingman Brewster grew convinced that the weekend's only real violence came at the direction of the conservative Nixon Administration. And he was determined to prove it.

That revelation comes from Brewster's right-hand man on Mayday weekend, Henry "Sam" Chauncey.

Authorities here and in Washington feared that radical leftists would try to blow up Yale and New Haven on Mayday. Yet the only violence that weekend targeted the radicals themselves and their supporters—the kind of historical point lost in today's revisionist wholesale dismissal of the '60s counterculture.

"Given what we knew, the Nixon Administration was the only logical candidate," says Chauncey, then Brewster's special assistant.

Someone planted an explosive which detonated shortly before midnight that 1970 weekend in

the cloak-room of Yale's legal library. The bomb tore up chunks of concrete inside the main floor area. Only a short while before, hundreds of people had attended a rock concert here. Fortunately, they'd left.

The next night, a fire destroyed the storefront of the left-liberal New Village Corner at Church and Elm streets. Racist hate graffiti was later found in the basement where the fire began.

Authorities never publicly identified a suspect in the bombing or arson.

Privately, Brewster and Chauncey and then-police chief Jim Ahern focused on the Nixon administration, according to Chauncey.

Before Mayday, Brewster had named a spot on the Nixon administration's infamous Enemies List. He'd given speeches attacking the Vietnam War and expressing sympathy for the anger of student protesters at the "hucksterized process"

that led to Nixon's election. Then, right before Mayday, he made famous comments seemingly agreeing with white radicals' suspicions about how the legal process treats blacks. "I am skeptical," he said, "of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States. In large part this atmosphere has been created by police actions and prosecutors against the [Black] Panthers in many parts of the country."

Vice-President Spiro Agnew responded by calling for Brewster's resignation in a bitter, *ad hominem* speech.

According to Chauncey, soon after Mayday Yale started hearing from moderate-Republican Yale alumni in Washington. They said that Nixon and Agnew and Attorney General John Mitchell wanted to have one university blow, so the country would turn against the universities. And they wanted it to be Yale, because they hated Brewster so much.

Meanwhile, Chauncey says, he, Ahern and Brewster were concerned about all the feds crawling around New Haven on Mayday weekend. Some came on official business, openly in contact with New Haven and Yale authorities: Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, for instance. But many others didn't.

Several books from the period make that point, too. So does current New Haven police chief Nick Pastore, then a key intelligence operative for Chief Ahern. He says there was lots of talk among cops about the CIA, FBI and other "Nixon people" in town "for Nixon reasons."

One such Nixon employee in town was John Dean, then a top assistant to Attorney General Mitchell. Later

he'd become White House counsel—and the star witness at the Senate Watergate hearings who revealed his own, and the rest of the Nixon Administration's, dirty tricks.

Sam Chauncey says that after he learned that Dean was in town, he asked the Attorney General's office whether anyone beside Ruckelshaus had come to New Haven. He says he was told no.

That's no big deal, Dean responds, because Ruckelshaus was the top man in town.

In a faxed response to written questions, Dean angrily denies having had anything to do with violence that weekend, or even any knowledge of it. He spent less than a day here, he says.

"The only memorable part of the trip," he notes, "was the FAA air-

plane we started out on from Washington lost its engine and had to make an emergency landing in Baltimore."

Sam Chauncey says that he and Brewster spent years filing Freedom of Information requests for documents about White House discussions concerning Yale and Mayday, in a quest to prove a connection to the bombing. They indeed received intriguing documents in return, Chauncey says. Pages upon pages of correspondence between Nixon and Mitchell which would begin with suspicious comments. They'd be followed by paragraphs blacked out by government censors. Yale never proved its case.



Brewster: Smelled the Nixon crowd amid the smoke.

Like Brewster, Police Chief Ahern is dead. He wrote about Mayday in his 1972 memoir, *Police in Trouble*.

On the one hand, Ahern blamed Nixon for increasing the chances for violence. Out of paranoia, Nixon pressed local FBI offices to churn out streams of intelligence reports about New Haven. Under pressure, officers generated half-baked rumors that local cops knew had no basis, Ahern wrote. Based on these rumors, Nixon sent in thousands of Marines and National Guardsmen, upping the ante for a provocation.

However, Ahern didn't pin the Ingalls Rink bombing on the right. It could have been "a member of the radical right... trying to kill demonstrators and retaliating against Yale for harassing them," he wrote. On the other hand, it could have been "a radical leftist... in an attempt to destroy Yale property and stir the demonstrators."

Ahern said his guess was the leftist—even though, in Chauncey's recollection, Ahern was "sure" the Nixon administration had something to do with the bombing, more sure than even Chauncey or Brewster.

Ahern's book was later discredited, upon revelations that he ran the country's busiest police illegal-wiretapping ring. He left that part out of his book.

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# Then & Now



## New Haveners recall how Mayday reached into their lives—and what it means today

By Paul Bass

### Frank Annunziato "A Sense of What a Movement Was"

Annunziato was a public school teacher active in the American Independent Movement (AIM) in 1970. AIM began publishing an alternative newspaper called Modern Times on Mayday. It also ran the Bread and Roses Coffeehouse on Elm Street, which helped feed activists entering town for the demonstration. Today he directs the Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining at Baruch College in New York.



I remember it very vividly. I was the office manager for the Hertz Corporation. We were on Goodwin Street in the Annex. It's the truck division. We had one of the trucks on the Green. I can't remember for what reason. It was on TV. I remember we received a phone call from our main office on Madison Avenue in New York City to "get that truck out of there!" They knew there was going to be trouble. I was living on Milnes Street in the Annex. We just stayed away. We were just unhappy with the whole situation. Everybody was up in arms about the Panthers. It wasn't like it is now; people didn't demonstrate. We thought maybe we were going to be bombings.

[She didn't agree that the Panthers couldn't receive a fair trial, as the demonstrators charged.] This wasn't the down South. There's no reason why anybody black or white wasn't treated equally. As far as I'm concerned, everybody's equal.

It was something I've never forgotten. They were all our age. I was 24. There was really, which was never topped sufficiently by the left, a lot of commonality between people demonstrating and people in the my. These were workingclass kids in the draft. These were people needed to talk to and communicate with. This incident proved that me. There were people in there it were with us...

It was a great, great week. You had a sense then of what a movement was. There were very few in my life that I had that sense. Jerry Rubin was on the Green

speaking. His vocabulary in those days—"fuck" had to precede every word. The crowd got sick of it. The crowd started chanting, "Fuck Jerry Rubin!" It was the most popular chant of the day. It was gross, what he was doing.

We were down there at night with all the tear gas and the mace and the pepper gas and stuff like that. It was one of the first times we were allowed to be inside Yale. There was disorder reigning everywhere. There was this almost surreal image going. There would be everyone there with handkerchiefs on their face. The army would lob some tear gas in the crowd. Everyone would start retreating. An hour later everyone came back. It was a lot of fun. It wasn't New Haven. It was a different city.

### Theresa Argento "We Just Stayed Away"

Argento, a lifelong community volunteer, today chairs the New Haven-Amalfi Sister City Committee and is president of the St. Andrew Ladies Society. She works for city government as an auditor.

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### Hank Parker "Our Greatest Hour"

In 1970, Parker chaired a group called the Black Coalition. It represented 11 African-American groups in New Haven which ranged from the "militant" Hill Parents Association and the Angry Young Black Men to the NAACP and the Urban League. He ran for mayor unsuccessfully in 1969, 1971 and 1979. He later served as state treasurer. Today he works for an asset-management firm on Wall Street.

Hell no, I wasn't glad the Panthers were in town. They wanted to move in and make certain that community support wanted to follow them around a number of issues—the school lunch program, what have you. But in addition they wanted the students walk out of school and demonstrate. I objected to that. I didn't think you should disrupt our education.

They had maybe six, seven, eight, 10 people. They didn't have community leadership with them. Their idea was they'd go around that group and create chaos and disorder and be able to be in front of it. We recognized that if we were going to have any success in any program to improve the human condition in our community, we would have to start with education.

Then we had a big meeting with the Panthers and our own group in the Hill. I remember it like it was yesterday. I knew there was going to be a fight. They had a guy, six-foot-six, maybe 240 pounds. He was supposed to be their warlord. In those days I was pretty physical myself, I owned a foot-three-and-a-half.

He came into the meeting and said, "Who is this guy Hank Parker?" I said, "I'm Hank Parker, and I don't have any tie on tonight. I'm here to get down with whatever I have to deal with to get this over with. But we're not going to pull our kids out."

We didn't have any trouble. It was just a matter of standing up...

Of all the struggles African-Americans have had in this country, we had a kinship for all the [black protest] groups, even if we disagreed. It would have been difficult for Stokely Carmichael or H. Rap Brown to get people to follow them. We felt they were throwing the stones through the windows that helped the rest of us get things accomplished...

What got this community from frazzled to solid was that people who came here and those that were trying to put on the demonstration couldn't find anything to be angry about. Yale had opened its door, fed these people, gave them a place to stay. If Kingman Brewster had said, "Lock the gates, don't let anybody in, the hell with them," we would have had the worst time in this city that you would have ever found. And members of our group who were as militant as the Panthers, if not more militant, if they had joined in the demonstration and raised hell there could have been trouble. But we stood tallest and had our greatest hour...

It elevated the Black Coalition, quite frankly. The Coalition had been the group you would have had to deal with. It lasted for the next decade or so. Our community has always had problems with who's the leader and who does everybody follow. I think that the Black Coalition, particularly after

the Mayday program, I believe that it was the group that represented the broadest section of that community. I don't know anybody that it did not represent.

It's not like that today. It has not been like that since, in terms of actually having an umbrella. We are headed for chaos, in my view. If there were as many guns among the youngsters in 1969 and '70, it would have been worse. With all these politicians talking about removing jobs and affirmative action—those were really the safety net. They gave hope.

### Chuck Allen "Shipped Out"



Allen was 16 and living in the City Point neighborhood at the time of Mayday; he remembers spending all of May and the summer out of town. He later became an alderman, then a state senator. Today he's an aide to New Haven Mayor John DeStefano.

There weren't too many blacks in City Point at that time. My father's fear was that those "crazy niggers" in the Hill would come burn down his house. The concern of people like my father was the middle-class would be the target. They didn't become the target...

It's a bit of revisionist history now for everybody to be talking about the era of Martin Luther King, like everybody in the black community immediately recognized these people as leaders. There were big debates I remember my grandmother and other people arguing. They thought Martin Luther King was dangerous. My father used to share those concerns. I don't know how I ended up being such a liberal!

My grandmother was very active in the union at the old Winchester plant. Lo and behold, we found out years later she was on the wiretap list. The reason as we have been able to deduce was because there was concern on people's part that the people organizing Winchester, particularly before Olin

bought them out in the '60s, the union movement was figured to be Communist, anti-American. Years later my grandmother's association with the union landed her on the enemies list...

My grandmother was every bit of four-foot nine, four-foot eight. She never moved off any place like Thompson Street [in Newhallville]. Her big accomplishment was helping to send her grandkids to college. She worked to the day she died in Winchester's plant. She worked overtime when the mortgage payment was due or she had to buy a winter jacket. I don't think her savings account ever reached into the three figures. But she became an enemy, a dangerous person! It always struck me as weird looking back.

### Marleen Cenotti "It Was a Wakening"

Cenotti was working with Christian Community Action in the Hill neighborhood to deliver meals and rides to house-bound people in 1970. She was also active in protest movements. Today she owns and runs the Advocate Press (no relation to this newspaper), still the printer of choice for progressive political groups.

I just felt like the city was under siege. It was very bizarre to be not in some Third World country and have the streets filled with men armed with canisters and shields. It was very frightening.

The tear gas wasn't until after dark. I don't think we were prepared. I remember somebody giving me a handkerchief and running off to the side. I was with several other friends; we couldn't believe what was going on. I remember that we didn't think anybody did anything, but it was as though the National



Guard folks were nervous and started dispersing these things.

We thought the Panthers were being railroaded. It was a waking. The civil-rights movement wasn't moving fast enough. It got a lot of people who were white, middle-class involved. I remember New Haven having a lot of white people involved in supporting the Panthers. Everybody was very idealistic and thought change was at hand.