

Captain Bobby Bowen of the Richmond office

Today I went to see Bobby at UC Davis hospital. He is very ill. We spoke for about an hour before the nurse came around for more tests. He is in good spirits. He told me that he had been feeling ill on and off since he came back from Mexico a couple of months ago. Bobby is an outdoors person, a nature lover who loves fishing and camping. He said he is going to get better so he can go camping again.

I have known Bobby for many years, since 1969. I first saw him in a Panther photo book called the "Vanguard" by P. Jones. Bobby joined the Party right out of the military in 1968. He has worked in Richmond since they opened the Richmond office. I used to see and talk to him at Political Education classes. He used to attend with Veronza Bower (Political Prisoner) who worked in Richmond also. Bobby was always very informed and liked to read.

Working in Richmond was no picnic. Richmond was a mixed bag of working class people and high unemployment. Richmond is home to Exxon gas company, but they employ very few Blacks from the community. Bobby helped start a number of Free Breakfast Programs and Liberation Schools in Richmond. Bobby today works with Kids at Risk in the Richmond area. He also oversees the needle exchange program to prevent the spread of disease.

I remember in 1970, I worked in Richmond for awhile; Bobby was well respected by the community. He got the Central Committee to have a free shoe and food giveaway out in North Richmond and hundreds came out in 1971.

In 1971, we were both line captains for the Bill Boyette boycott and spent long days on the line together. From the boycott, Bobby became close to Ray "Maasai" Hewitt (we all became close to Ray) and worked with Ray until he left the Party.

After I left the BPP in 1974, I moved to LA and got a job through Larry Green at the Watts Summer Festival working at the main office. It wasn't until the actual Festival that I met the Field Security team. The leader was Ray Hewitt and Bobby was working with him. We were all glad to see each other and remained in touch with each other. Bobby and I were both pall bearers for George Jackson in 1971. Bobby has always been the type of brother who was proud of the BPP Legacy. He was involved in "It's About Time Alumni Committee" in the 1990's. I would see Bobby often in the last few years. He

still works in North Richmond and last year he told me about a baseball team in North Richmond called the Black Panthers after the BPP. They were a team of youngsters about 10, 11, and 12 years old. They wanted the name because of the BPP Legacy in North Richmond. The team came in second in their section.

You could ask Bobby a question about Party history and he would tell you the answer and then say “Hell, I was there when that happened.” He always attended our annual Xmas gatherings at Madalynn’s in Sacramento, as well as Reenie’s Thanksgiving dinners. His partner lives in our neighborhood and I would often see him jogging around Curtis Park. I would stop sometimes and talk and other times I would honk. The last time I saw Bobby is when he came over to the house and dropped off a donation to our “Let Us Not Forget” program back in April.

Drop Bobby a card and wish him well. His address is 2171 Sarazen Ave., Sacramento, CA 95822

