

## Afeni Shakur and the struggle

Written by Westside ID119

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Tupac Shakur's mother, Afeni Shakur activist, Black Panther, poet, actress, NY 21 political prisoner, addicted to freedom and liberation The Black Panther Party, life addicted to the assessment of Amerikkka's idea of her: helpless Black woman without a clue to what life is/was about. Being born Black in the 1960's-1970's was a struggle for dignity and power. A time to challenge prejudice and edicts, sexism etc. Corporate and institutionalized deaths, her language is fierce and loving hard and soft her words are lullabies and martial songs. Her words, so untold full of secrets waiting to reveal themselves, Tupac and Afeni are two miracles! two individuals daring to live and create and love. Both cross color, class and gender. Afeni is indeed the miracle woman wonder. Afeni comes from a very closed world, from Lumberton, North Carolina. She moved to New York when she was in the sixth grade, she was 11 and lived in the Bronx. she went to the Performing Arts High School in Manhattan. She wanted to be an actress. When she was in her late teens she would go to Manny's Bar on 169th St. in the Bronx. This guy use to come in there named Shaheed. At the time I was a greasy short haired little colored girl, skinny, with no breasts and never had no butt, she wasn't the one men would look at but she was smart and had a nice smile. Shaheed introduced her to the lessons given by the Nation of Islam

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As she listened to Brother Shaheed, she began to like herself, because of what she was, this little Black girl with short hair. He introduced her into MalcolmX, At 19 she got a job working at the post office, she met a brother there, and they became lover, she was with him when she first saw the Black Panther Party, they found their Blackness together, She had gone to the Black Power Conference in Philadelphia and that singular event affected her like no other even in her life. She had seen the pictures of the Black Panthers in Sacramento. What a wonderful sight that was to her, A black woman who was unapologetic, told her if she wanted to be a revolutionary she didn't have to do anything but walk through the supermarket with a razor blade and run her hands across the flour and the sugar An act of resistance She saw Elderige Cleaver, you have to have heard him to know how wonderful and beautiful he was and what a motivator he was for those of us who didn't go to college or who were dropouts from college, she explains. His words became like food, hope and dreams in her brain, her name Afeni was given to her by the brother who built the Yoruba village in South Carolina, Afeni means "dear one" or "lover of the people". Harlem Time It was the first time Afeni heard the Ten Point Program of the Black Panther Party and she was truly hooked. She heard Bobby Seale recite the Ten Point Program. He could recruit a town full of Black people just by saying it.

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Meetings for the Black Panther Party, were held at L.I.U. on Saturdays at 1:00 p.m. Afeni was there every Saturday.

The Panthers got involved in the school strike. She was now part of the Black Panthers Party and Lumumba Shakur's wife. Lumumba later got arrested and one other member was beaten up, two were killed in L.A. And the trigger was allegedly pulled by members of the Ron Karenga Led, United Slaves (US) Organization. There was a party rally the next morning, At 5:00a.m. there was banging at Afeni's apartment door, Lumumba ran to the door and looked out the peak hole, there was a fire and a whole bunch of people yelling. He opened the door and police came in with shotguns at his head, one at his stomach and one on my stomach. Brother Lumumba was a polygamist. Sister Sayeeda was his first wife, Afeni at first disrespected her, She thought Sayeeda wasn't bad enough to be the wife of this revolutionary brother. Afeni now feels it was cruel and insensitive, but she didn't understand that then. But she accepted Afeni into her home, All I did was make her life miserable and i was with her husband, which we were sharing. Earlier the police took Lumumba and Afeni in a caravan, to the D.A.'s office, there she saw everybody in the party. Her sister and her sisters husband scraped together all the money they could to bail me out of jail. They raised 1000 dollars. But when they go into the courtroom the first name they call is Lumumba Abdul Shakur. They announce his bail at 100,000 dollars, they got to my name and said the same. She thought they were mistaken. They didn't misspell her new name. So she went to jail and there she sat for eleven months while George Jackson, Jonathan Jackson and Fred Hampton were killed. While in jail She was about organizing the jail, anybody and anything she could. Finally woman from the church raised her bail The Dickersons (Charlotte and Angela) and their friends. Black and White women raised 64,000 dollars in cash and then the church put up 36,000 dollars in church property. They weren't even party members! Young and older woman, Black and White Leftist lawyers Church going mommas. She was amazed by that. Bail revoked, she was imprisoned in the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village. In her cell she patted her belly and said, "This is my prince. He is going to save the black nation. "By the time Tupac was born on June 16, 1971, Afeni had already defended herself in court and been acquitted on 156 counts. Living in the Bronx, she found steady work as a paralegal and tried to raise her son to respect the value of an education. From childhood, everyone called him the "Black Prince". I named him Tupac Amaru Shakur (Shining, Serpent, Blessed One). I wanted him to have the name of revolutionary, indigenous people in the world. I wanted him to know he was part of a world culture and not just from a neighborhood...When he was two years old and did something wrong, I would say to him, an independent Black man wouldn't do that. He was always an independent Black man! I wasn't by myself when my son Tupac died: a lot of mommas have lost their sons to this country's violence. I AM NOT ALONE. So

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don't try to isolate me, If you do, it will relieve ordinary people of assuming their important roles. We all have important roles to assume before we leave this planet."

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