

Sorrow: The Good Soldier and the Good Woman

Joy James

The enemy culture, the established government, exists first of all because of its ability to govern, to maintain enough order, to ensure that a cycle of sorts exists between the various levels and elements of the society. “Law and Order” is their objective. Ours is “Perfect Disorder.” Our aim is to stop the life cycle of the enemy culture and replace it with our own revolutionary culture. This can be done only by creating perfect disorder within the cycle of the enemy culture’s life process and leaving a power vacuum to be filled by our building revolutionary culture.

—GEORGE JACKSON, *BLOOD IN MY EYE*

It is with much sadness that i say my last goodbye to Safiya Bukhari. She was my sister, my comrade and my friend. We met nearly thirty-five years ago, when we were both members of the Black Panther Party in Harlem. Even then, i was impressed by her sincerity, her commitment and her burning energy. She was a descendent of slaves and she inherited the legacy of neo-slavery. She believed that struggle was the only way that African people in America could rid ourselves of oppression. As a Black woman struggling in America she experienced the most vicious forms of racism, sexism, cruelty and indifference. As a political activist she was targeted, persecuted, hounded and harassed. Because of her political activities she became a political prisoner and spent many years in prison. But she continued to believe in freedom, and she continued to fight for it. In spite of her personal suffering, in spite of chronic, life-threatening illnesses, she continued to struggle. She gave the best that she had to give to our people. She devoted her life, her love and her best energies to fighting for the liberation of oppressed people. She struggled selflessly, she could be trusted, she was consistent, and she could always be counted to do what needed to be done. She was a soldier, a warrior-woman who did everything she could to free her people and to free political prisoners. . . . I have faith that the Ancestors will welcome her, cherish her, and treat her with more love and more kindness that she ever received here on this earth. —ASSATA SHAKUR, HAVANA, CUBA, AUGUST 29, 2003

Service Women

Family is a middle passage—one repeatedly returned to and reconstructed, or reinvented and reenacted. So, too, is war—a middle passage where hell is the birth canal.

State soldiers fight in family units on battlefields. The enslaved refashion family with their fictive kin. The imprisoned force its reappearance with manufactured gender roles. Revolutionary cadres forge family in underground armies. Youthful gangs reinvent it in the street. The corporate state polices and ritualizes it with legalistic trappings.

With notable mortality rates, the women—part Greek chorus and part cyborg—bear the brunt of this middle passage, this birthing. They create and are held captive by this primary social and political unit, one that reproduces and trains soldiers and so prepares society for life and killing.

In the Greek chorus, women are maternal (within state machinery and its military and police mechanisms, they are cyborg: part mechanistic enforcers for a democracy driven by constitutional amendments that humanize corporations and dehumanize people as penal slaves). In *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson narrates the role of the Greek chorus as a gathering of slave women who defined freedom in juxtaposition to enslavement in the service of an elite and parasitical democracy, one built on the wealth and injustices that empire can imagine and fashion. Fed on slavery and imperialism, the Athenian polis shaped the private realm of captives to serve the public realm of senators and war makers. (Whereas Ancient Athens provides the mythic norm for America's penal democracy, the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment creates its cyborg face, humanizing or granting civil rights to property—not predominately white-owned humans but predominately white-owned corporations—and its Thirteenth Amendment, which reduces captives to commodities by legalizing slavery for those duly convicted of a crime.)

In every armed conflict investigated by Amnesty International since 1999, the torture of women was reported, most often in the form of sexual violence.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, "RAPE AS A TOOL OF WAR" (2003)

MONTREAL—When the Belgian Defense Ministry earlier this year blamed North America for the world's worst ever genocide over its killing of millions of indigenous peoples, outrage at the claim spotlighted a topic that rarely enters the public realm. . . . The assertion was made as part of a display on Belgian peacekeeping worldwide, to mark the 10th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda. . . . It claimed that 15 million native peoples have been murdered on this continent since Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas in 1492, and suggested that the extermination continues today.

—MARTY LOGAN, "INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY: GENOCIDE IT IS," *IPS NEWS* (AUGUST 9, 2004)

In June 1991, former National Guard Staff Sgt. Sharon Mixon was gang-raped by six soldiers. She was told by a military policeman, "That's what you get for being a woman in a war zone." Mixon decided not to report the assault to her commander.

—*ALL THINGS CONSIDERED*, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (MAY 11, 2004)

The Bush administration has decided to pursue a 16-year-old effort to deport two Palestinian activists [Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh . . . allegedly affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine] who as students distributed magazines and raised funds for a group the government now considers a terrorist organization, despite several court rulings that the deportations are unconstitutional because the

men were not involved in terrorist activity. The case . . . could pose a new judicial test of a controversial provision in the [2001] Patriot Act [that] . . . prohibits supplying material support for organizations the government deems “terrorist,” even without evidence of a link to specific terrorist acts.

—R. JEFFREY SMITH, “PATRIOT ACT USED IN 16-YEAR-OLD DEPORTATION CASE: ADMINISTRATION REVIVES 1987 EFFORT,” *WASHINGTON POST* (SEPTEMBER 23, 2003)

It’s almost too perfect. Two young working-class women from opposite ends of West Virginia go off to war. One is blond and has aspirations to be a schoolteacher. The other is dark, a smoker, divorced and now carrying an out-of-wedlock baby. One becomes the heroic poster child for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the subject of a hagiographic book and tv movie; the other becomes the hideous, leering face of American wartime criminality, Exhibit A in the indictment of our country’s descent into the gulag. In the words of *Time* magazine, [Private First Class] Lynndie England is “a Jessica Lynch gone wrong.”

—FRANK RICH, “SAVING PRIVATE ENGLAND” *NEW YORK TIMES* (MAY 16, 2004)

There are around 639 million small arms and light weapons in the world today. Eight million more are produced every year. Every year, throughout the world, roughly half a million men, women, and children are killed by armed violence—that’s one person every minute.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “SHATTERED LIVES: THE CASE FOR TOUGH INTERNATIONAL ARMS CONTROL” (OCTOBER 8, 2003)

In the chorus of the oppressed, as distinct from that of the conqueror, the maternal woman—as good woman—manifests in opposition to colonizing warfare. She serves as the one who protects life in the roles of either the pacifist or the militarist freedom fighter, or as mother or daughter, the survivor who functions as the primary caretaker of the children, the aged, and male warriors. (Recall Black Panther Party women who marched chanting, “Set our warriors free! Free Huey!”)

The chorus is political. Chroniclers memorize and narrate histories of repression and resistance; they create alternative archives, having recognized that the state will neither memorialize its insurgents and captives nor acknowledge its repressive wars. So maternal women (and their male counterparts) record familial pain and subversion in penal and war narratives, hold vigils, plan memorial services, and eulogize dead comrades while keeping stories—that rationalize killing and give meaning to dying—alive. All good girls can hope to become good women one day. Yet, the most hunted and embattled women, good soldiers, struggle with fairly limited recognition and approval. Their traumatic tales most often surface in memoirs or testimonials.

So, for example, having broken out of prison to live (and die?) in exile, the former Black Liberation Army (BLA) leader Assata Shakur—her \$1million bounty assigned by Attorney General Alberto Gonzales brings new meanings to her memoir—notes of her comrade Safiya Bukhari: “She was a soldier, a warrior-woman who did everything she could to free her people and to free political prisoners.” Safiya Bukhari survived the maiming medical practices of prison doctors (although her uterus did not), only to

succumb to the standard black woman's diseases of hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and heart failure.

When I call for consolation, a white woman soldier imprisoned for years for anti-state warfare tells me that Safiya died months after white political prisoners were freed and BPP/BLA members were denied new hearings or parole; that Safiya collapsed hours after she buried her own mother—the grandmother who raised Safiya's young daughter the day her own daughter became a BLA fighter and fugitive, going underground only to surface for a eight-year prison term. I am told, in short, that Safiya likely died from grief.

Suffering, in the desert of state surgical strikes in military occupations, or the concrete muck of family violence in the households of police and military peacekeepers—or less patriotic batterers—is a maternal skill. Women, in diverse and distinct formations, fight for the state or the liberated territory and for family in varied configurations. As loyal or long-suffering, and so faithful, such fighters are simultaneously good women and good soldiers.

Suffering always bends and often breaks when it does not kill. The political context, though, determines the socially recognized value of the sufferer. Few have held observance for the sorrow of the Puerto Rican *independentista* Lolita Lebrón when her nine-year-old son drowned soon after she was captured as a prisoner of war (POW), as a fallen revolutionary soldier, following her 1954 attack on Congress. Lebrón's religious mysticism (as noted in her granddaughter's memoir, *The Ladies' Gallery*) flaws an iconic movement martyr, one further enshrined in suffering when she leaves prison for a few days, twenty-three years later, to attend the internment—

In Pennsylvania and some other states, inmates are routinely stripped in front of other inmates before being moved to a new prison or a new unit within their prison. In Arizona, male inmates at the Maricopa County Jail in Phoenix are made to wear women's pink underwear as a form of humiliation.

At Virginia's Wallens Ridge maximum security prison, new inmates have reported being forced to wear black hoods, in theory to keep them from spitting on guards, and said they were often beaten and cursed at by guards and made to crawl.

Corrections experts say that some of the worst abuses have occurred in Texas, whose prisons were under a federal consent decree during much of the time President Bush was governor because of crowding and violence by guards against inmates.

Judge William Wayne Justice of Federal District Court imposed the decree after finding that guards were allowing inmate gang leaders to buy and sell other inmates as slaves for sex. The experts also point out that the man who directed the reopening of the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq last year and trained the guards there resigned under pressure as director of the Utah Department of Corrections in 1997 after an inmate died while shackled to a restraining chair for 16 hours. The inmate, who suffered from schizophrenia, was kept naked the whole time.

The Utah official, Lane McCotter, later became an executive of a private prison company, one of whose jails was under investigation by the Justice Department when he was sent to Iraq as part of a team of prison officials, judges, prosecutors and police chiefs picked by Attorney

General John Ashcroft to rebuild the country's criminal justice system.
—FOX BUTTERFIELD, "MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS IS CALLED ROUTINE IN U.S.," *NEW YORK TIMES* (MAY 8, 2004)

The *New York Times* reports that there have been new releases of prisoners formerly held at Abu Ghraib. The photo shows a young man, age 17, being embraced by his mother and sisters. His body completely slumps into their protective arms. He is two years younger than my daughter. I am heartsick wondering if he will ever recover from his horror.

Muslim men are described as sexually humiliated at Abu Ghraib. And white women of the working class are used to "pussy whip" Muslim men. . . . Three of the torturers—Megan Ambuhl, Lynndie England and Sabrina Harman—so key to the pictorial narrative—are white women. The Brig[adier] General in charge of the prisons in Iraq, Janis Karpinski, is also a white woman. So is Maj[or] General Barbara Fast, the top U.S. Intelligence Officer who reviewed the status of detainees. . . .

Why in the Balkan wars was the raping of women a central narrative demonizing Serb nationalism while the rape and sexual humiliation of Muslim male prisoners [is] largely silenced? And, why, today is the central narrative Muslim men's humiliation [rape] while the violation of their women counterparts has been largely muted?

—ZILLAH EISENSTEIN, "SEXUAL HUMILIATION, GENDER CONFUSION AND THE HORRORS AT ABU GHRAIB," *PORTSIDE* (JUNE 2004, WEEK 3), [HTTP://LISTS.PORTSIDE.ORG/CGI-BIN/LISTSERV/WA?A2=IND0406C&L=PORTSIDE&T=0&P=190](http://lists.portside.org/cgi-bin/listserv/wa?A2=IND0406C&L=PORTSIDE&T=0&P=190)

We completed a documentary, *Every Mother's Son*, about police brutality during [Rudolph] Giuliani's term

and to be visited by thousands in a cemetery—following her daughter's suicide. Those who cannot read Lebrón's emotional silence may attempt to read *Assata: An Autobiography* but not see Shakur in her skirmishes against prison abortionists and terror in her raging, desperate determination to have a live birth. Rarely does public discourse acknowledge pregnant Black Panthers battered bloody by traumatized vets and refugees from counterrevolutionary wars, rebel soldiers who father without admittance to Veterans Administration hospitals.

Some have witnessed the grief fissures of Lila Lipscombe, in Michael Moore's film *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Coping with the death of her soldier son who had denounced the Iraqi invasion in a letter home months before he was killed, she daily unfurls an American flag on the exterior walls of her suburban home.

Embraced by U.S. nationalists and moviegoers, Lipscombe as a patriot is permitted public space, although a contested one, and visibly given respect for her sorrow in mainstream culture that rages against the state's betrayals—but not against the state, which appears more familiar than alien, and usually never appears as enemy culture to be disrupted with perfect disorder.

In contrast, another cadre of good women will have their stories preserved by political organizations and movements because their victimization comes at the hands of the penal democracy and its prison and police apparatuses, while they actively served the community or subaltern nation. This suggests that for most of the political public, it is not the privatized pain of women that gets recorded, retold, and raged against, but the torture and abuse of

a people, *its* family, *its* females. The good woman, like the good soldier, only appears in service; at all other times, she is generally invisible or disappeared.

Service to the larger unit—which, of course, includes the self—appears in the political telling of public trauma. Such illustrations depict the heinous nature of captivity and racial and class warfare. Mamie Till Mobley’s memoir, *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America*, recounts the murder of her fourteen-year-old child, Emmett, and becomes an act of resistance and soldiery in liberation warfare. Why else would a middle-class black woman have an open casket in 1955 for her only child—murdered, maimed, and decomposing? Why would a middle-class black woman instruct the undertaker not to “improve” on her son’s appearances (instructions that were violated when dangling eyes and tongue were removed and orifices were stitched closed)?

The good soldier undertakes the public’s demand to witness wounding and terror and to remember war victims but to keep stoic silence, as well. Such a witness in 1955 took nearly five decades for public commentators to hear, and for them to correct political memory and genealogy by locating a funeral held months before Rosa Parks’s civil disobedience aboard a Montgomery bus as the birth of a movement (one that Martin Luther King Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference referred to as “the second reconstruction” and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, bearing the brunt of racial terror, labeled the “second civil war”). It was the visual narrative that Miss Parks had witnessed months earlier that led to her refusal to give up a seat on public accommodations as an act of soldiery.

(1994–2001) as mayor of New York City, told through the eyes of three mothers who lost sons to police violence and who have become spokespeople for police reform. . . . Iris Baez’s son Anthony was killed during a pick-up football game on the streets of the Bronx in 1994, when a police officer put him in an illegal chokehold after the football hit the officer’s car. Kadiatou Diallo’s son Amadou was unarmed when he was shot 41 times in the doorway of his apartment building by four police officers [in 1999]. Doris Busch Boskey’s son Gary (Gidone) Busch was pepper-sprayed, surrounded, and then shot to death by police while holding a small inscribed hammer, even though witnesses at the scene said it was clear he posed no threat. —KELLY ANDERSON AND TAMI GOLD, “IN THEIR OWN WORDS,” NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS (JULY 4, 2004)

In 2005, 38.6 million people worldwide were living with HIV/AIDS, 24.5 million in Sub-Saharan Africa. Women make up 51 percent of those suffering from HIV; and Black Women account for 72 percent of all new HIV cases among women.

Over 25 million people have died since the first cases of AIDS were identified in 1981.

—UNAIDS, *2006 REPORT ON THE GLOBAL AIDS EPIDEMIC* (MAY 2006); LYNETTE CLEMETSON, “LINKS BETWEEN PRISON AND AIDS AFFECTING BLACKS INSIDE AND OUT,” *NEW YORK TIMES* (AUGUST 6, 2004)

According to the U.S. State Department, between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders annually; between 18,000 and 20,000 of those victims are trafficked into the United States. If trafficking within countries is included in the total world figures, official U.S. esti-

mates are that 2 to 4 million people are trafficked annually. However, there are even higher estimates, ranging from 4 to 27 million for the total number of forced or bonded laborers.

—FRANCIS T. MIKO, "TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE," CRS REPORT FOR CONGRESS (JULY 7, 2006)

Between 1993 and 2005, more than 400 women and girls were murdered in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua, Mexico; 20 percent of the cases involved sexual violence.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, "KILLINGS AND ABDUCTIONS OF WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ AND THE CITY OF CHIHUAHUA—THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE GOES ON" (FEBRUARY 20, 2006)

Although the rate of offenses for females remains much lower than that for men . . . according to the FBI's [2003] Uniform Crime Report, females represented 23.3 per cent of all arrests in 2003. Additionally, 20.4 percent of all female arrestees were juveniles under age eighteen. Since 1995, the total number of female State and Federal prison inmates has grown 5 percent a year, compared to the 3.3 percent average annual growth for male prisoners.

— NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICES, "WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM," AT [HTTP://WWW.NCJRS.GOV/](http://www.ncjrs.gov/) (APRIL 6, 2006)

In Rwanda between 250,000 and 500,000 women, or about 20 percent of women, were raped during the 1994 genocide. Ten years after the 1994 genocide, nearly all of these women have remained without legal redress or reparation.

—INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, REPORT (2002), IN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, "MAKING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN COUNT" (MARCH 5, 2004)

In mind when she resisted segregation and en route to jail was the picture of Emmett Till, an image provided by the mother as good woman and good soldier; one who defied government orders to keep the casket closed and refused to shield the public from the visual residues of law and order—lynching for a whistle at a white woman. So, the good women present trauma to their own children, witnesses to a mutilated child's corpse and the failure to soldier.

Tens of thousands came to the Chicago funeral for the burial, months before Miss Parks sat down. Hundreds of thousands saw the images of the mutilated body in black publications such as *Jet* (reflecting an insurgent twist on repressive cyber-communities created earlier by old postcards of lynchings captured in "Without Sanctuary" to contemporary digital [porn] abuse circulated at and beyond Abu Ghraib). For those viewed as good women, good soldiers, their narratives and stories, their sorrow, have space in the political, public world for retelling and remembering as long as they remain good servants.

It is service to the other, the non-self—for or against—the "enemy culture"—as family domesticity and captivity suggest multiple "enemy" formations—that makes the female a woman and a soldier, precisely laudable as a good woman and a good soldier. Good women protect and reproduce family (fictive, militarist, political). Good soldiers defend the nation-state or counter-state, the empire, or the liberated maroon societies.

What is the worth of a woman? Her service to nation formation or revolutionary formations, all of which is the refashioning of family. Who values a woman stripped of service? In a war time—perpetual time for an aggrandizing nation—a woman

who does not soldier for empire or revolution against imperial ambitions is an anomaly as a political woman. (The value of women functioning as commodities determined by market forces is not addressed here.) If such a woman claimed public space and war status, her soldiering would be treasonous, would it not? For it serves neither state nor counter-state formations.

The good woman and the good soldier serve movements or entities larger than that of “woman.” That is, they mingle and merge as socially significant when subordinate. The burka-beauty of the female guard of Louis Farrakhan or Muammar Qaddafi pose in photo ops, a visual testimony of aggregates of service women willing to die or kill for male insurgency (an inverse of Nikki Giovanni’s poem exhortations to black men). Present photo ops of presidents greeting and speaking before troops display the black and female and black female serving bodies. It is that unity, that solidarity that assures of the formidable powers of law and order and ensures the long lifecycle of enemy cultures.

Bringing comfort to state or counter-state soldiers during times of war are women. Good soldiers birth and bury. Good women reassure and soothe. Females, exhausted by journeys and their attendant deaths and rebirths, who reinvent in hell the role of the midwife, simultaneously resist and replenish war. What would the traditional soldier, the male soldier, do without the good woman? Who would buttress battlefield horror by projecting real and symbolic antithesis—something to go home to, an ideal worth living and killing for?

In turn, what would white women in their forays against the object-subjects of their fear and envy

One transsexual/transgender person is murdered in the U.S. each month.

—NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS, REPORT (2004)

There are an estimated 27 million slaves worldwide.

—MSNBC, “MODERN DAY SLAVES” (FEBRUARY 27, 2004)

The Pentagon still lies about Agent Orange. . . . How did Iraq get weapons specific agents [and] . . . who was shipping it over there? . . . Clearly it was illegal. . . . I do not think the Pentagon wants to get into any of that so the cover-up goes on.

—FRANCIS A. BOYLE, “FACULTY LECTURE ON BIO/WARFARE/TERRORISM/WEAPONS,” UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHICAGO (APRIL 18, 2002)

The Amazon rainforest in Brazil is home to over 60,000 plant species, 3,300 animal species, and 20 million people, including an estimated 180,000 indigenous people. In January 2001 the Brazilian government announced its plans for “Avança Brasil” (Advance Brazil), a U.S.\$40 billion plan to cover much of the Amazon rainforest with 10,000 [kilometers] of highways, hydroelectric dams, power lines, mines, gas and oil fields, canals, ports, logging concessions and other industrial developments. Scientists predict that these planned developments will lead to the damage or loss of between 33 [and] 42 percent of Brazil’s remaining Amazon forest.

—GREEN PEACE, “AMAZON REPORT” (2003)

Marital rape is recognized as a crime in only 51 countries. Only 16 nations have legislation specifically referring to sexual assault, while only 3 have legislation that specifically addresses violence

against women as a category of criminal activity in itself.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “MAKING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN COUNT” (MAY 3, 2004)

Much of the evidence of abuse at the prison [in Abu Ghraib] came from medical documents, . . . [and] records and statements showed doctors and medics reporting to the area of the prison where the abuse occurred several times to stitch wounds, tend to collapsed prisoners, or see patients with bruised or reddened genitals.

—ROBERT JAY LIFTON, “DOCTORS AND TORTURE,” *NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE* 351, NO. 5 (JULY 2004)

In 2000, a study of prisons in four Midwestern states found that approximately one in five male inmates reported a pressured or forced sex incident while incarcerated. About one in ten male inmates reported that that they had been raped. Rates for female inmates, who are most likely to be abused by male staff members, vary from seven percent in some facilities to twenty-seven percent in others.

The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics report found that the number of formal complaints of sexual violence filed in adult prisons and jails increased nearly 16 percent, from 5,386 in 2004, to 6,241 in 2005. More than one-half of these complaints concerned staff sexual misconduct or harassment.

—STOP PRISONER RAPE, “THE BASICS ON RAPE BEHIND BARS,” [HTTP://WWW.SPR.ORG/EN/FACTSHEETS/BASICS.ASP](http://www.spr.org/en/factsheets/basics.asp) (2004); STOP PRISONER RAPE, “GOVERNMENT PRISONER RAPE STUDY SHOWS INCREASE IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE REPORTS, RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT CORRECTIONAL AUTHORITIES' FOLLOW UP,” WEBSITE (JULY 30, 2006)

(white men) and women or people “of color” in their battles of envy and fear with elite white women be or do without the antithesis of the “good woman”—the black woman, the site of “perfect disorder” in an enemy culture when she refuses to serve or pacify non-blacks nurtured by antiblack racism.

What can an “enemy culture” (Jackson's phrase tidily focuses war talk) not conceive and practice in familial, interpersonal, social, and international relations? Black female humanity. Nor can it envision the “perfect disorder” of association without coercion; the “perfect order” of democracy freed from police, law, parasitical relations to prison or slave bodies (and legalistic war documents such as the Thirteenth Amendment, which codifies slavery). In social-political formations, where police-as-law dies, freedom-as-political liberation lives.

Who soldiers for the death of law and the police? For the lives of those designated expendable or socially dead? Obviously few. Soldiers, like women, are captives, but captivity has specificity and rank, just like the military. A soldier's and woman's rank and status are determined not necessarily by acts but by their proximity to presence (whiteness and property) and distance from absence (blackness and captivity).

Good women reproduce family law, and so the police—hence, we reproduce law and order; the police disproportionately discipline and punish black and poor bodies, queer and female forms. Therefore, to seek to “elucidate” the meaning of “the prison within the prison state,” as George Jackson urged, requires considering what would have to disappear (or be restricted to performance rituals cloistered on stage or screen): predator-prey formations.

The woman no longer beaten by man; the woman no longer servant to man; the black no longer servant or marked as prey and then castigated as predator; the black woman freed from the non-blacks and the non-women; and the child able to fend off adult predation—all this disrupts law-and-order schemes. All of this may be more perfect disorder than most can handle.

The “perfect disorder” that Jackson calls for seems to require a lot of dying: not just physical, but intellectual and political deaths in which the definition of “good,” the signifier of the perfect functionary (and the perfect woman), is retired. Yet Jackson does not create the death or advocate for it. It is ever present. For the murderous gender misanthropes, the only “good” woman is a dead one—physically or psychologically. For religious misogynists seeking the maternal martyr, the “good” woman is a dead soldier of god; ultimately, the dead good woman is the sacrificial lamb who first gives life to, then gives up life for, a fetus—the final service from a reproductive body that stills its own life instinct. To abort a penal democracy and family captivity in all its forms would indeed be an obscenity, a transgression against man and god-state.

“Good” is elusive and mercurial as a prefix to soldier, because soldiery is not an ontological state; it is a function. Hence, the “good” soldier (like the “good” woman) need only be proficient and obedient in her duties to merit acceptance or praise. Efficiency is not ethics. Perhaps a moral order that is not legalistic can be reclaimed. Perhaps the woman must die to “goodness” in order to tend as midwife to the “perfect disorder” of revolutionary culture. Such a death, when it leads to rebirth into a refusal to soldier (except for

In the United States, a woman is raped every 6 minutes; a woman is battered every 15 seconds.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “BROKEN BODIES, SHATTERED MINDS: TORTURE AND ILL TREATMENT OF WOMEN” (2001)

Over 1.2 million children worldwide, including thousands in West Africa, are recruited from their homes each year by individuals seeking to exploit their labor. One child recalls: I made an appointment with the man to meet at Balanka, at night. . . . There were many other kids there—more than 300 of us in one truck, packed like dead bodies.

—HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, “TRAFFIC IN CHILDREN” REPORT (AUGUST 2003)

From 1998 to 2001, the U.S.A., the U.K., and France earned more income from arms sales to developing countries than they gave in aid.

—ANUP SHAH, “THE ARMS TRADE IS BIG BUSINESS,” [HTTP://WWW.GLOBALISSUES.ORG/GEOPOLITICS/ARMSTRADE/BIGBUSINESS.ASP](http://www.globalissues.org/geopolitics/armstrade/bigbusiness.asp) (SEPTEMBER 7, 2004)

[People] taking the gloves off in interrogation is a thinly veiled reference to torture, but calling torture “stress and duress” or “abuse” is the homage paid to the still current imperative of denial. The presumptions that torture is both necessary and effective, and the implications of breaking the torture taboo by legalizing torture are shaping debates in the U.S.

—LISA HAJAAR, “TORTURE AND THE FUTURE,” *MIDDLE EAST REPORT* (MAY 2004)

Reported incidents of anti-LGBT violence . . . rose from 1,720 in 2003 to 1,792 in 2004. Included in the rise in incidents for the year, was an 11 percent increase in anti-LGBT murders, which rose from 18 in 2003 to 20 in 2004. During 2004, the total number of victims rose

4 percent, from 2,042 in 2003 to 2,131 in 2004.

—NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS, “ANNUAL REPORT ON ANTI-LGBT HATE VIOLENCE RELEASED” (APRIL 26, 2005)

The proportion of people living in extreme poverty on less than \$1 a day dropped by almost half between 1981 and 2001, from 40 percent to 21 percent of the global population. In 1980, one out of every ten poor people lived in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2000, the figure rose to one out of every three. Future projections predict that one out of every two poor people will live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

—WORLD BANK, “DRAMATIC DECLINE IN WORLD POVERTY, BUT PROGRESS UNEVEN” (APRIL 23, 2004)

From 2002 to the present, Human Rights Watch estimates that at least one thousand Afghans and other nationals, many of which are civilians, have been arrested and detained by U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. Not a single person detained in Afghanistan . . . [was] afforded prisoner-of-war status or other legal status under the 1949 Geneva Conventions. . . . The Detainee Abuse and Accountability Project has documented more than 330 cases in which U.S. military and civilian personnel are credibly alleged to have abused, tortured, or killed detainees [in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantánamo Bay]. . . . Only a fraction of the more than 600 U.S. personnel implicated in these cases—40 people—have been sentenced to prison time.

—HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, “ENDURING FREEDOM: ABUSES BY U.S. FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN” (MARCH 2004), AND “U.S.: MORE THAN 500 IMPLICATED IN DETAINEE ABUSE” (APRIL 6, 2006)

The U.S. Department of Defense now spends half of its entire bud-

herself), betrays (state and counter-state) family formations. Given the varied and dangerous enemy cultures in warfare in the domestic realm, good women like, and as, good soldiers reasonably fear the consequences of treason: penal isolation as social death and the socially dead.

The Domestic Underground

In the United States, B.C.E. and A.C.E, have been supplanted by pre- and post-September 11 for those who reinvent a timeline that births new reality and people. Watching PBS’s *Lerhrer News Hour*, I was pleased to note that the program’s cultural correspondent Elizabeth Farnsworth would be interviewing the African American feminist, and University of California, Berkeley, professor, June Jordan to discuss her new memoir *Soldier: A Poet’s Childhood*.

In one of her last interviews, June, who had had recurring battles with breast cancer, thanked her father, the frustrated Jamaican “race man” fractured by U.S. racism, for the ritual late-night bed beatings he had administered during her youth. He, she asserted, had made her into a soldier. Elizabeth said nothing. I turned my head from the screen.

Only when I read *Soldier*, a few years later, did I realize that the seven-year-old had interrupted the bed beatings from the man who wanted everything for his son-daughter and had arranged summer camp and prep school in anticipation, an interruption that came late at night when she pulled a knife from under her pillow and asked her father: “What do you want?” Ill-prepared for such black women soldiers in the pre-September 11 era, I shall try to meet them now, noting that good soldiers are not just good mothers and wives in the family matrix—they are also good daughters.

Some years before June's book was published, I fumed while vacuuming the town house of my father (a retired lieutenant colonel and former ATF man) in a gated community in suburban Indiana. I rolled the upright Hoover over bullet shells and casings, noting the lack of suction to extract them from the carpet of his master bedroom. I struggled with plush pile for twenty minutes. Then I stopped. I realized from my own ROTC instruction and firing of weapons that vacuuming up live ammunition was potentially explosive. On my hands and knees I retrieved scores of bullets, around and under the king-size bed, and placed them in a container next to the seven(?) handguns and the shotgun that I had collected around the house. Checking to see that no bullets remained, I went to scrub the tub. Incapable of loading a gun and pulling a trigger—although amply trained as a career military officer and a Vietnam veteran (sent as an officer, allegedly in part to stop black troops from fragging—throwing hand grenades at their white officer corps to discourage [black] suicide missions)—my father had succumbed to a heart attack. (“Who really knows in these cases?” responds the coroner when I ask him for “cause of death.”) Father decomposed and waited. I was summoned to Indiana by police and lawyers—themselves summoned by the adjoining town house residents who had summoned police to break down his front door weeks after his death. I collected the body; I cleaned up after him and readied his house for sale and his corpse, in closed casket, for an eighteen-gun salute military burial. (As my godmother insisted: What mattered was to respect his wishes, not my politics.)

What are the stories that women will not tell about soldiers returning from wars of occupation or from state prisons? About cleaning and caring

get on private military contractors; the top fifty contractors receive more than half of all the money.

—MORNING EDITION, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO (SEPTEMBER 30, 2004)

Physical pain amounting to torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure . . . or even death. . . . For purely mental pain or suffering to amount to torture . . . it must result in significant psychological harm . . . lasting for months or even years. . . . We conclude that the statute as a whole makes clear that it prohibits only extreme acts. . . . [For a defendant to be convicted of torture], even if the defendant knows that severe pain will result from his actions, if causing such harm is not his objective, he lacks the requisite specific intent even though the defendant did not act in good faith.

—U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, “MEMORANDUM FOR ALBERTO R. GONZALES, COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT” (AUGUST 1, 2002)

[In September 2004,] over 50,000 civilians . . . [had] died in the Darfur region of Sudan and over 1 million are internally displaced, while more than 170,000 have crossed the border into Chad. In over half of the towns burned, women reported rape as a tactic of warfare. The widespread rape of young boys has also been reported. . . . Despite the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement in May 2006, grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law continue unabated in Darfur.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “DISTRESS, DENIAL AND DISAPPOINTMENT IN DARFUR: FINDINGS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISIT TO DARFUR” (SEPTEMBER 21, 2004), AND “MORE KILLINGS AS ‘PEACEKEEPING GAP’ THREATENS IN DARFUR” (AUGUST 12, 2006)

As of September 30, 2004, there were an estimated 517,000 children in foster care. Children in foster care are three to six times more likely than children not in care to have emotional, behavioral and developmental problems. Children are eleven times more likely to be abused in State care than they are in their own homes, and die as a result of abuse in foster care 5.25 times more often than children in the general population.

—NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT INFORMATION, "FOSTER CARE NATIONAL STATISTICS" (2003, 2005)

The four armed services, coordinated by the Joint Staff Urban Working Group, launched crash programs to master street-fighting under realistic third-world conditions. "The future of warfare," the journal of the Army War College declared, "lies in the streets, sewers, high-rise buildings, and sprawl of houses that form the broken cities of the world." . . . Artificial cityscapes . . . were built to simulate combat conditions in densely populated neighborhoods of [third-world] cities. . . . Today, many of the Marines [Army units] are . . . graduates of these Urban Warrior exercises.

—MIKE DAVIS, "THE PENTAGON AS GLOBAL SLUMLORD," [HTTP://WWW.TOMDISPATCH.COM/INDEX.MHTML?PID=1386](http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=1386) (MAY 2004)

One in six U.S. prisoners is mentally ill. . . . There are three times as many men and women with mental illness in U.S. prisons as in mental health hospitals.

—HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, "MENTALLY ILL MISTREATED IN U.S. PRISONS," OCTOBER 2003

In over 178 countries, more than half a million children under 18 (some under 10 years old) have

for the emotionally and physically wounded, the suicidal, the violent and sadistic, the addicted, the manically depressed, the rape survivors and rapists, the misogynists whose stature as war casualties and tragic war heroes mitigates their excesses or at least their public condemnations?

Everyone who suffers and survives verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual misogyny and domestic battery soldiers. Domestic violence and state violence are so routinely practiced and deployed on the American landscape that they are normalized. They are rendered fully or partially invisible, given that female soldiery is underground.

The first battleground is the home. The first targets are usually the bodies of women and children. It is difficult to get accurate body counts of casualties of U.S. warfare. But if one factors in domestic violence with military violence, the numbers of casualties, including intergenerational trauma casualties, would have to be considerable, although not often considered by politicians and political analysts. The vast majority of those injured in domestic violence are women and their children. The vast majority of those injured in military and mercenary forays are women and their children.

The women beaten not by the state but by its victims, men who are casualties of state violence, returning vets from foreign wars or returning vets from domestic wars, have stories that are crowded out in the public realm, stories that are shushed. A "movement" woman battered by a "movement" man (or an imperial peacekeeper raped by another militarist) reports familial violence to whom? The incest survivor's dilemma: from which parental authority to seek sanctuary and shelter from the (possible)

pending punishment for outing a familial predator? To whom does one report the rapes and beatings of female Air Force Academy cadets in Colorado Springs? Women soldiers on tour in Iraq? Female cops on patrol in New York or Los Angeles? Women warriors in antiwar/imperialist/racist organizations? Ultimately, it is all a “family” matter.

Good women and good soldiers care for the wounded. Bury the dead. Orchestrate pomp and ritual at military or political funerals. Create memorials despite domestic abuses. You can place any dead child from your womb on display, drape and fold any flag over a coffin, in variations of a color scheme—red, white and blue (for the United States and the territorial prey: Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic) or black, red, and green. Few good women get to tell, as Lisa Rios did while speaking about her suicidal husband, the rap star Christopher Rios—a Puerto Rican, or Boricuan, icon whose skillful lyrics prove a painfully engaging study in hard-core brutality—of their gratitude for a death that enabled them to survive spousal battery by a male survivor of childhood domestic violence (battery captured on home movies and replayed, with Lisa’s authorization, in the posthumously released documentary *Big Pun: Still Not a Player*). What good women say of their state or counter-state soldiers—their kin, “Better him than me”?

Perhaps to soldier for nothing or no one but the female body means the unthinkable: to embrace a selfishness not found in the selflessness and sacrifice of nation building (whether that of empire or liberated zone). A self-embrace, female body of own female body, outside of “womanhood” and “soldiering,” could bring a coherence to stories that make no

been recruited into government armed forces, paramilitaries, and civil militia. . . . An estimated 30 percent are girls. . . . Approximately one-fourth of these child-soldiers are Burmese. In Colombia, more than 11,000 child combatants, one-quarter to one-half female, fight for guerrilla and paramilitary groups. 11,000 children were involved in the last years of fighting in Angola. In Liberia there are an estimated 21,000 child soldiers. [The] U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand Ramcharan, stated in 2003 that: “One out of every 10 Liberian children may have been recruited into the war effort. Liberian children have suffered all kinds of atrocities, sexual violence, disruption of schooling and forced displacement.”

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “CHILD SOLDIERS: A GLOBAL ISSUE” (2004), “CHILDHOOD DENIED: CHILD SOLDIERS IN AFRICA” (JULY 2004), AND “CASUALTIES OF WAR: WOMEN’S BODIES, WOMEN’S LIVES” (OCTOBER 13, 2004)

Each year, more than 15,000 women are sold into sexual slavery in China. Two hundred women in Bangladesh are burned with acid by husbands or suitors. More than 7,000 women in India are murdered by their families and in-laws in disputes over dowries. In South Africa, a woman is shot dead by a current or former partner every 18 hours.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” (2004)

Between May and November 1967, the U.S. Tiger Force platoon, created to spy on enemy forces in Vietnam, killed over 327 civilians. “They dropped grenades into underground bunkers where women and children were hiding—creating mass graves . . . frequently tortured and shot prisoners, severing ears and scalps for souvenirs. . . . [A] four-and-a-

half year Army investigation substantiated numerous war crimes but no one was prosecuted. . . . Mr. Rumsfeld, whose office declined to comment . . . served his first stint as secretary of defense under President Gerald Ford beginning in November 1975—the same month the Tiger Force investigation was closed.

—“TIGER FORCE SPECIAL REPORT,”
TOLEDO BLADE (OCTOBER 3, 2003)

Over the last 250 years, 97 percent of America’s original forests have been logged.

—“WARCRY,” “BURNING TO BREATH FREE: ECO-ACTIVIST GETS 23-YEAR SENTENCE FOR TORCHING SUV’S!,” EARTH LIBERATION FRONT PRISONERS SUPPORT NETWORK, [HTTP://WWW.SPIRITOFFREEDOM.ORG.UK/PROFILES/FREE/BURNING.HTML](http://WWW.SPIRITOFFREEDOM.ORG.UK/PROFILES/FREE/BURNING.HTML) (2004)

[George W.] Bush’s environmental record is appalling. . . . He murdered several thousand civilians to install an oil pipeline in Afghanistan for his industry sponsors, supports ethnic cleansing in Palestine in pursuit of hegemony in the Middle East, is gearing up to massacre countless more Iraqis for oil, sabotaged the Kyoto Protocol, subsidizes SUVs, and yet, no one has called him an “eco-terrorist,” and no court has dared hold him accountable.

—JEFF LUERS, EARTH LIBERATION FRONT PRISONERS, [HTTP://WWW.SPIRITOFFREEDOM.ORG.UK/PROFILES/FREE/BURNING.HTML](http://WWW.SPIRITOFFREEDOM.ORG.UK/PROFILES/FREE/BURNING.HTML) (2004)

One in four LGBT people are battered by a partner. . . . In 2004 alone, there was a 35 percent increase in serious injuries and a 71 percent increase in deaths or murders that occurred as a result of the violence.

—KRISTEN LOMBARDI, “ON ANOTHER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FRONT,” *BOSTON PHOENIX* (AUGUST 8, 2003); ANDY HUMM, “LGBT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISES,” *GAY CITY NEWS* (JULY 21–27, 2005)

sense, and a silence to silencing that masks trauma. Fill in silences that disappear embattled women. Only the traumatized have an incoherence—one too daunting for me to edit—and absence of self that allow them to describe and mask the horror of a black partner who attempts suicide while fleeing imprisonment and the state’s torturous COINTELPRO (torture used overwhelmingly against black and indigenous rebels) with the words—written by a “wife” and potential contributor to this volume—for the hunted, despairing: He “accidentally shot himself in the head.”

Battered women have their tongues cut out, or they self-inflict the procedure or perform it on girls and younger women (students and daughters) when their batterer(s) requires protection—that is, when he is not really, truly from the enemy culture, or when women actually belong to “law and order.” A chorus of soldier or slave women en route to hospitalize, divorce, or inter rebel brothers, fathers, husbands, sons censor. To whom could a woman soldier tell a complete story? Especially when the male kin has been feminized by male violations administered by the state: cattle prods placed on the genitals of captured militants, police beatings, death and rape (threats) in penal captivity, shootings in foreign wars, eleven-year-old suicide bombers and watching them explode. And then some, many, dream of being released to go home to some woman’s bed—a woman who now has in her keep another feminized tortured body and psyche, besides her own, to administer to.

Who works in the underground? Domestic workers and revolutionaries. There, good women and good soldiers all—they vacuum. What is sucked

away in the cleaning for academic speeches, political archives, and public spectacles or consumption may be a private suffering and sorrow that defies order. Will war stories that refuse to be told in the absence of the female body restore the missing and dismembered? Or shall, in the presence of the “burning energy” of women in hospital wards and burial sites, war stories with their ever present eulogies be told in the most condensed script, such as that offered by Assata in honor of kin: “The Ancestors will welcome her, cherish her, and treat her with more love and more kindness than she ever received here on this earth.”

Women now make up more than 75 percent of registered migrant workers from Indonesia, 70 percent from the Philippines, and 69 percent from Sri Lanka.

—HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, “ASIA’S MIGRANT WORKERS NEED BETTER PROTECTION” (SEPTEMBER 1, 2004)

In Bosnia and Herzegovina 20,000–50,000 women were raped during five months of conflict in 1992. In some villages in Kosovo, 30–50 percent of women of child bearing age were raped by Serbian forces.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL U.K., “AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” (MARCH 5, 2004)

[The] U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that women and children comprise 70–80 percent of the world’s refugee and internally displaced population.

—AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, “STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN” (2004)

DHORUBA BIN WAHAD

Dhoruba Bin Wahad (Richard Moore) was born in the South Bronx in 1944. A member of a Bronx gang, the Disciple Sportsmen, during his teens, Bin Wahad entered prison at eighteen and served a five-year sentence. On his release in 1968, he joined the newly formed New York chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Bin Wahad worked on tenants' rights, police brutality, and drug-rehabilitation programs in Harlem, the South Bronx, and Brooklyn. To curtail drug abuse, he worked in coalition efforts with the Young Lords Party and Young Patriots Party to develop the Lincoln Detox Center, a hospital-based rehabilitation center that used acupuncture rather than methadone maintenance for drug addiction.

The New York Police Department (NYPD), in complicity with FBI COINTELPRO operatives, indicted Bin Wahad and twenty other leaders of the New York BPP, the "New York 21," on April 2, 1969, on more than one hundred conspiracy charges that included plots to assassinate New York City police officers and dynamite city department stores, a botanical garden, a police station, and a railroad right-of-way. The charges were without foundation and were later dismissed. However, in the aftermath of the arrests and warrants, the New York 21 were incarcerated, and the New York BPP leadership was decimated. Bin Wahad and Michael Cetewayo Tabor were released on bail and fled the country during the trial because of a plot initiated by the FBI to incite the national BPP leadership, under Huey Newton, to kill them. After two years in prison and an eight-month trial, the New York 21, including Bin Wahad and Tabor in absentia, were acquitted. Jury deliberations lasted less than an hour, and the verdict was returned on May 13, 1971. Bin Wahad returned to the United States but remained underground.

In June 1971, the NYPD apprehended Bin Wahad outside a Bronx "after-hours" bar frequented by drug dealers and their associates, which he was attempting to rob. He was charged with the attempted murder of two police officers, Thomas Curry and Nicholas Binetti, who had been attacked in Manhattan two months

earlier. The case set the precedent for what became known as the Joint Terrorism Task Force, an investigative effort among NYPD, New York State Police, and the FBI. After three trials in the case of *People v. Dhoruba Bin Wahad*, Bin Wahad was convicted in July 1973 and sentenced to twenty-five years to life. Two years later, the Church Committee Senate hearings brought COINTELPRO under (semi-)public scrutiny, and Bin Wahad's lawyers filed a civil-rights action to obtain all documents pertaining to him and the BPP in New York. Five years later, they received more than 300,000 highly excised, barely readable documents that disclosed forged letters, phone calls, and anonymous articles aimed at defaming the BPP. Documents also contained over two hundred previously undisclosed pages of three FBI reports on Bin Wahad's case, including a record of an anonymous call to the police in which the prosecution's key witness, Pauline Joseph, exonerated Bin Wahad. The defense received the final set of "Newkill" (an acronym referring to killings in New York that the agency wanted to connect to the BPP) documents in 1987, twelve years after the initial civil-rights action to procure the evidence. Citing the inconsistency and possible perjury of Pauline Joseph in the 1973 trial and conviction, Dhoruba Bin Wahad and his lawyers filed for a retrial. A New York Supreme Court granted a retrial on March 22, 1990, and released Bin Wahad from prison. The District Attorney's Office dismissed his case on January 19, 1995, formally ending the twenty-six year struggle that began with the New York 21 case in 1969.

Following two lawsuits in 1995 and 2000, Dhoruba Bin Wahad received settlements for personal damages from the FBI and the City of New York, respectively. With these funds, Bin Wahad founded the Campaign to Free Black and New Afrikan Political Prisoners (formerly the Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and Prisoners-of-War) and established the Institute for the Development of Pan-African Policy in Accra, Ghana.