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THOMAS WANSLEY: A BLACK BROTHER "LYNCHED!"

In Lynchburg, Virginia, on March 18th, Thomas Wansley, a black brother jailed more than 4 years and on "Death Row" for 18 months, was again "lynched" a third time by the white jury, judge, entire court, newspapers and citizens of Lynchburg. The "great white pioneering fathers" could not have chosen a better name for their plantation-like town. As if to fulfill a prophecy, Lynchburg has become the scene of many trials, or mis-trials, which resulted in black men being executed for supposedly raping white women and white men set free for raping black women and little girls. In Lynchburg, black men are legally lynched while white men are set free or given the mildest of "sentences." The 4 year ordeal of Thomas Wansley is a case in point of Lynchburg "southern justice."

In 1962, Wansley was accused of raping 2 women, one Japanese, the other white, along with robbery of \$1.39. Twice, Wansley was tried for these 2 alleged rapes and robbery, twice he was sentenced to death by electric chair. His attorney, who appealed the convictions each time, has been duly smeared by the white newspapers of Lynchburg in their attempts to convince the white townsfolk that Atty. Kuntsler is or was connected to so-called "Communist-front" groups. Not only did the Japanese woman admit that she had freely engaged in sexual relations many times, but she also left the state and refused to return for the trial. The other alleged victim, a 59 year old white spinster, whom the courts portrayed as a super-pious "chaste and virginal" little lady "on her way to prayer meeting," did not identify Wansley before his arrest, and could not identify him during the first trial. Of course, the Lynchburg papers had already printed his picture and accused him of the crime beforehand. During the second trial, her memory was greatly improved, since she was then able to "positively" identify Wansley as her attacker.

These two trials span a period of 4 years, it has been a long 4 year ordeal for Wansley, who has lived day-today in prison with the electric chair never far away. During those 4 years, concerned people the world over have protested by sending telegrams and letters not only to the American government, but also to the United Nations--messages which formally accuse the United States of violating the U.N. Charter on Human Rights. A Wansley Protest Movement was organized in Lynchburg which received the support of thousands.

On March 18th, 1967, a third trial was held in Lynchburg for Thomas Wansley. In spite of proof which indicated false evidence, coaching of state witnesses, and outright prejudice of the all-white jurors against Wansley and his lawyer, the jury again found him guilty on all counts. Recognizing the national and international furor which resulted from the first two trials, this time he was not sentenced to death, but "only" given two life sentences--to run consecutively, one after the other.

Lynchburg "justice" is determined to "lynch" Thomas Wansley, and "get this Nigger." But black folk there do not intend to let this case go un-noticed, and allow "Charlie" to keep lynching our men. As the Japanese woman goes about her life somewhere in Hawaii and the "virgin" white spinster attends her prayer meetings, Lynchburg whites and their cousins across the country had better take notice that black people will not tolerate any more of their nonsense in the courts. An appeal has been filed by Wansley's lawyer to carry this case to a higher court, if this appeal is denied, and if justice does not result from another trial, this may well be a signal to our black brothers and sisters everywhere that "the time is near at hand." As James Baldwin so appropriately quoted in one of his most famous works, "God Gave Noah the Rainbow Sign, No More Water, The Fire Next Time."