

Political Prisoner

Eddie Conway

Charges

Marshall Conway, or "Eddie" as he prefers to be called, was arrested on April 26, 1970 and charged with the murder of a Baltimore policeman. A long-time member of the Black Panther Party in Baltimore, Eddie had at the time of his arrest already been subjected to constant harassment by Federal and local police as part of the COINTELPRO program. The evidence against Eddie at trial was sparse; no physical evidence was presented and the only witness to the murder failed to correctly identify Eddie on his first few attempts, only picking him out of photo lineup after police coaching. If Eddie had pursued a standard criminal defense he would, in all likelihood, have been acquitted. However, Eddie chose to pursue a political defense. On most days of the trial, Eddie was barred from the courtroom for the unacceptable behaviour of demanding an attorney of his own choosing or the right to represent himself. In his absence, Eddie's defense was argued by a court appointed attorney who was often intoxicated.



To this day, Eddie maintains his innocence. He has been incarcerated for nearly forty years.

Bio

While incarcerated, Eddie has furthered his education: taking a Bachelor of Science in social science and an associate degree in computer science. He has been the inmate co-ordinator of his prison's library and the director of the "To Say Their Own Words" project, a series of fifty videotaped interviews with prisoners on a variety of topics. Eddie was one of the founding members of the United Prisoner's Labor Union at the Maryland Penitentiary and was the chairman of the Prison Committee to Correct Prison Conditions, an ACLU-affiliated organization that has litigated on issues of overcrowding, brutality and health concerns. He is also the founder of the Maryland Lifers Association, which runs courses in computer literacy and English literature for inmates.

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