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**Activist Friendships in the Time of Burnout: Marilyn Buck and
Mariann Wizard, 1966-2010**

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Mariann Wizard, 1966-2010**

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And we're gonna raze, raze the prisons
To the ground.

-Joan Baez

Abstract

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During the 1960s and 1970s, Marilyn Buck, a white antiracist activist, engaged in activism outside the confines of feminist organizations largely dominated by upper middle-class white women. Marilyn worked in solidarity with both the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA) in the Bay Area, operating almost entirely behind the scenes. Following her arrest in 1973 for allegedly purchasing ammunition and weapons for the Black Liberation Army under a false name, she spent nearly the rest of her life in prison, eventually becoming a well-known prison activist and developing a vast network of friends and supporters from all over the world. For the duration of her long and sometimes grueling activist journey, Marilyn completely evaded burnout. Activist burnout poses a serious threat to the survival of social movements, striking even the most seasoned activists. In this thesis, I argue that Marilyn's talent for creating and maintaining strong relationships played a major role in facilitating her ability

to avoid burnout and keep her activist commitments strong. Many have celebrated Marilyn's activist work and literary achievements, yet her interpersonal strengths must be acknowledged: she managed to build an immense international support network while living behind prison walls. In this multilayered study, I not only analyze Marilyn Buck's significance as an activist who built an extensive friendship network and maintained an unwavering, lifelong commitment to her beliefs, but I also attempt to understand her life through the double lens of the perspective of her close friend, Mariann Wizard, and my own scholar/activist positionality. I combine the personal with the archival to demonstrate the value of Marilyn and Mariann's friendship—both for the two of them and for modern-day scholars and activists looking to gain insight on the importance of activist friendships.

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Introduction

Marilyn Buck lived a truly extraordinary life. A self-described “U.S. anti-imperialist political prisoner,” she dedicated her energy to working “in solidarity with the New Afrikan Independence movement and in opposition to U.S. political and military aggression around the world.”¹ During the 1960s and 1970s, Marilyn Buck, a white antiracist activist, engaged in activism outside the confines of feminist organizations largely dominated by upper middle-class white women.² Becky Thompson notes, “For Marilyn Buck, attempts to develop an antiracist politic in the 1960s and 1970s also meant choosing to work in organizations that did not actively support a feminist politic.”³ Marilyn operated almost entirely behind the scenes, consciously choosing to foreground the agency of people of color in the fight for justice; she worked in solidarity with both the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Black Liberation Army (BLA) in the Bay Area. Following her arrest in 1973 for allegedly purchasing ammunition and weapons for the Black Liberation Army under a false name, Marilyn spent nearly the rest of her life in prison, eventually becoming a well-known prison activist who committed herself to

¹ “In Memory of Marilyn Buck,” *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 3 (2010): 698, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/stable/27919130>.

² Marilyn’s story is just one of many that fits into a larger project of recovering the history of “multiracial feminism,” or “the liberation movement spearheaded by women of color in the United States in the 1970s that was characterized by its international perspective, its attention to interlocking oppressions, and its support of coalition politics.” Feminist scholar Becky Thompson contrasts multiracial feminism with hegemonic feminism, describing hegemonic feminism as “feminism that is white led, marginalizes the activism and world views of women of color, focuses mainly on the United States, and treats sexism as the ultimate oppression.” This version of feminist history focuses solely on radical, socialist, liberal, and cultural feminism, ignoring “the centrality of the feminism of women of color in Second Wave history.” Becky Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Studies* 28 (2002): 337, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178747>.

³ Becky Thompson, *A Promise and A Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 122-123.

working in HIV/AIDS peer groups, promoting literacy, teaching yoga and sitting meditation, and raising awareness about other political prisoners such as Mumia Abu-Jamal. Her vision for the world still holds relevance today, especially in light of ongoing struggles against racist state violence: “I still believe we can live in a different kind of society where we all contribute according to our ability but share according to our needs, where there exists an equality among peoples and nations, regardless of skin color, language, culture, sex, or sexual orientation.”⁴

I first met Marilyn Buck’s oldest friend, Mariann Wizard, a little over a year ago in Austin, Texas. A former member of Students for a Democratic Society, the Communist Party, and the Community United Front (a 1960s East Austin Black liberation group), Mariann has seen it all. I sat down with Mariann for a series of oral history interviews focused on her near-lifelong friendship with Marilyn Buck and her memories of Marilyn’s unwavering commitment to anti-imperialist, anti-racist activism, in addition to reviewing the hundreds of letters that Mariann and Marilyn exchanged throughout the years.⁵ I consider the pages that follow to be a multi-layered study: I not only analyze Marilyn Buck’s significance as an activist who built an extensive friendship network and maintained an unwavering, lifelong commitment to her beliefs, but I also attempt to

⁴ Resistance in Brooklyn, *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners*, Montreal, Quebec: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002, 58.

⁵ Mariann Wizard donated this collection of letters to the Briscoe Center of American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Mariann said that she’d always make time for me, and she truly meant it. Despite her extremely full schedule due to her upcoming move to Belize—which involved packing up her entire house, saying goodbye to friends, and making arrangements for her wedding (her fourth marriage, this time to a man 20 years her junior)—Mariann never hesitated to drop everything to meet with me for an interview or answer my phone calls and Facebook messages. I couldn’t have asked for a more helpful, caring oral history informant if I’d tried; without Mariann’s ongoing support, this project would not have been possible.

understand her life through the double lens of the perspective of her close friend, Mariann Wizard, and my own scholar/activist positionality. I combine the personal with the archival to demonstrate the value of Marilyn and Mariann’s friendship—both for the two of them and for modern-day scholars and activists looking to gain insight on the importance of activist friendships.⁶

Paging through the letters that Marilyn and Mariann exchanged over the years, I found myself returning again and again to Marilyn’s unwavering commitment to her beliefs. Marilyn didn’t just dream of a world free from racism and oppression: she consistently acted on her beliefs for the duration of her life, despite the many challenges she faced. As the revolutionary ferment of the 1960s eventually dissipated, Marilyn watched her fellow comrades give up the fight and “sell out” to the system in droves. In addition, she endured years of repression as a political prisoner within the United States prison industrial complex while witnessing many of the activists with whom she formerly struggled die or become locked up at the hands of the state. In an undated letter to Mariann, she writes, “It is hard to realize that so many of the people who have been in liberation struggles from the ‘60s are now in jail and others dead. The state is a vicious hunter.”⁷ After learning of her imprisonment, many of her family members and former friends disowned her, refusing to visit or even write due to their disagreement with her political commitments. Yet in the face of all of these obstacles—both personal and

⁶ In addition to archival materials from the Briscoe Center for American History, I drew upon Marilyn Buck’s master’s thesis, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination” and newspaper sources obtained from the Independent Voices underground press database.

⁷ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, undated, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

political—Marilyn never ceased to engage in activism. Her correspondence with Mariann Wizard and other supporters—along with her role as a teacher, translator, mentor, and AIDS peer advocate while behind the wall—reveal Marilyn’s impressive resilience.

For the duration of her long and sometimes grueling activist journey, Marilyn completely evaded burnout. Activist burnout poses a serious threat to the survival of social movements, striking even the most seasoned activists. In *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, Paul Rogat Loeb discusses some of the causes behind burnout and poses the following compelling questions: “What creates this revolving door, through which citizens take powerfully committed stands, and sometimes help change history, then withdraw in isolation and despair? What is the difference between those who find ways to persist and those who do not?”⁸ According to Loeb, understanding burnout represents empowerment for activists.⁹ He notes, “The more we know about the obstacles that lie ahead, the better equipped we’ll be to surmount them.”¹⁰ His analysis holds extreme relevance to Marilyn Buck’s life story, and as an activist from the younger generation, I’m specifically interested in examining Marilyn’s ability to sustain her activist commitments and avoid burnout.

In the chapters that follow, then, I apply Loeb’s discussion to Marilyn Buck’s life and ask the following question: how did Buck manage to remain committed to her activist principles, despite enduring extremely repressive conditions within the prison industrial complex and watching many of her activist peers sell out? In response, I argue

⁸ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2010, 244.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 248.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

that Marilyn's talent for creating and maintaining strong relationships played a major role in facilitating her ability to avoid burnout and keep her activist flame burning. Many have celebrated Marilyn's activist work and literary achievements, yet we should also acknowledge her interpersonal strengths: she managed to build a vast network of friends and supporters from all over the world while living behind prison walls.

After her initial arrest back in 1973, Marilyn essentially had to start from scratch and develop completely new relationships and connections. With the exception of Mariann Wizard, hardly anyone corresponded with Marilyn when she was first sent to Alderson, a women's prison located in West Virginia. At the time of her passing in 2010, however, she had corresponded with and mentored hundreds of young poets and activists, adopted several godchildren, received a place on prominent mural in San Francisco honoring political icons, and engaged in regular visits with supporters from across the country. Mariann Wizard astutely notes that Marilyn accomplished more as an activist and built more friendships during her near-lifetime spent behind prison walls than most people ever do on the outside. Mariann explains, "Here is this woman locked up in a prison, whose voice they have tried to silence for 32 years, and she has more friends, more relationships, is more influential, reaches more people."¹¹ Marilyn Buck was not only a dedicated activist, but she was also an amazing friend.

In my analysis, I take two main routes. First, I closely examine Marilyn Buck and Mariann Wizard's ongoing friendship to show how exactly it contributed to Marilyn's unwavering commitment to her antiracist principles throughout her life. While the story

¹¹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

of their friendship in a way may serve as a case study that demonstrates the quality and depth of Marilyn's many friendships, their relationship also had special significance. Marilyn considered Mariann to be her oldest friend, and time and time again, she acknowledged her gratefulness for her ongoing support. Mariann stayed with Marilyn through everything—from their carefree “Gentle Thursdays” at the University of Texas at Austin to their heartfelt conversations in prison visiting rooms across the country—and always extended open arms. She viewed Marilyn first and foremost as a friend, and she never judged her, even though they oftentimes held radically different beliefs.

Marilyn's friendship with Mariann—just one of many close relationships that Marilyn cultivated—factored into her success as an activist in several ways. To begin, Marilyn's correspondence with Mariann allowed her to both celebrate her victories and voice her apprehensions about what was to come. Partaking in this sharing represents a key strategy for avoiding burnout. Secondly, through exchanging letters, visiting, and sending packages, the two women nurtured each other's souls and engaged in activist caretaking—Loeb suggests that finding ways to nurture ourselves promotes success in high-stress situations. Next, Marilyn's friendship with Mariann provided her with something that's seemingly basic yet extremely powerful: someone who believed in her. As Loeb states, “Sometimes, the difference between staying in a movement and dropping out can be as simple as people who believe in us.”¹²

Finally, Marilyn's friendship with Mariann offered a space in which she could feel comfortable reflecting on her ever-evolving activist identity. Loeb argues that

¹² Ibid., 272.

successful activists recognize the palimpsest-like nature of identity (new layers building upon the old) and allow their identities to constantly change and develop over time, rather than remaining bound to outdated identities. While Marilyn remained true to her beliefs, her identity and approach to activism certainly did not remain static over the course of her life. During her later years at the Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin (a women's prison located 25 miles from Oakland), she frequently wrote about the transformation that she underwent as a result of finally confronting the ongoing censorship that she'd faced during her years in prison. This transformation did not entail her renouncing her beliefs as some of her comrades did over the years, but rather, it consisted of her re-framing the way in which she presented her ideas. Marilyn described this transformation as moving from a "revolutionary" identity to an "artist-as-revolutionary" identity. Even though Marilyn primarily reflected on this transformation near the end of her life, the changes began to take place much earlier, and the letters that she exchanged with Mariann Wizard reveal many of these transformative themes. Mariann saw all of these changes unfold and stuck with Marilyn through her identity-building process.

My second major route moves my analysis outward and takes a broader look at Marilyn's friendship networks—both those established with comrades behind the wall and with supporters on the outside. These networks provided Marilyn with many of the same benefits that her friendship with Mariann did, in addition to giving her an outlet for her activism and access to some of the things that she missed out on as a result of committing her life to activism (such as having children). Communities keep activism alive, and by the end of her life, Marilyn had joined up with several—HIV/AIDS activists

behind prison walls, aspiring poets and writers, and anti-prison activists in the Bay area serve as just a few examples. Through corresponding and interacting with these communities, Marilyn found room to receive feedback on and refine the overall vision guiding her activism, another key strategy that Loeb suggests. Working together with friends and supporters, Marilyn affected change and continued to act upon her beliefs, despite facing harsh repression.

Both of these key threads in Marilyn's story resonate with a longstanding historical tradition: the importance of women's friendships within radical social movements. For example, Marilyn's experiences have striking similarity to those of the "shesterka," or the group of six women imprisoned for their revolutionary activism in the Russian underground at the turn of the 20th century. Sally Boniece argues that these women derived strong emotional support from the friendships that they pursued with other revolutionary women in the Russian underground, allowing them to reinforce and deepen their activist commitments.¹³ Boniece explains that women who pursued socialist activism were oftentimes forced to renounce their family ties, and as a result, their friendships with other women acted as an "emotional substitute."¹⁴ Marilyn, like the shesterka women, found solace and sustenance in her friendships, particularly her close friendships with other women. Despite the fact that Marilyn operated in a completely different time and space from these revolutionary Russian activists, we can draw parallels

¹³ Sally A. Boniece, "The 'Shesterka' of 1905-06: Terrorist Heroines of Revolutionary Russia," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58 (2010): 173-174, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/stable/41052426>.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

between their stories, situate them within this larger historical tradition, and make further inferences regarding how friendship facilitates activist commitments.

Before moving forward, I must add that I'm not attempting to attribute Marilyn's ability to remain committed to her principles solely to her friendship network. Certainly, Marilyn possessed other attributes that aided this accomplishment, such as her remarkable (and sometimes seemingly superhuman) selflessness. In prison, she endured repressive, physically degrading conditions (including the denial of adequate medical care on numerous occasions), yet she rarely ever complained about her own situation. Instead, Marilyn sought to keep the focus on national liberation movements around the world. Her letters with Mariann Wizard clearly reveal this strategy. In a letter dated December 31st, 1987, Marilyn states, "Now I've seen your swimming pool too, as well as the famous vacation scenes. Ah, for a vacation from this place..."¹⁵ This type of statement exemplifies the extent of Marilyn's complaints. Marilyn would always close her letters to Mariann with a discussion of current events and the state of the anti-imperialist movement, rather than focusing on her own situation. Her selflessness appears in media accounts of her story as well. When interviewed and asked about the conditions that she faced in prison (or what type of help she needed from the movement), she would routinely sidestep the question by instead drawing attention to the struggles of oppressed peoples and the degrading conditions endured by other political prisoners.

¹⁵ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 31 December 1987, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Marilyn Buck's story deserves to be told, yet hardly any accounts of her life exist. While Marilyn would likely advocate for spending time on the ongoing struggle rather than chronicling the events of her life, antiracist activists cannot successfully operate without role models in the struggle and a road map filled with pathways for navigating its associated challenges.¹⁶ Marilyn Buck skillfully utilized friendship as a means for avoiding burnout, and feminist psychologist Miriam Zukas' description of friendship nicely summarizes why friendship serves as a valuable lens through which to view Marilyn Buck's life story: "Friendships provide a space for self-expression and self-exploration, for creating and reminiscing about the past, and, with long-standing friends, a repository for their histories."¹⁷ The letters, poetry, and writing samples that Marilyn exchanged with friends and supporters over the years now serve as a literal repository from which scholars and activists can withdraw a wealth of insight.

I proceed chronologically throughout my narrative, attempting to situate the major milestones of Mariann and Marilyn's friendship within the contemporaneous historical and cultural context. In Chapter 1, "The Making of a Revolutionary Friendship: Marilyn and Mariann's Early Years," I set the scene and outline the foundations behind Marilyn

¹⁶ White people must do their part to educate themselves and act as accomplices to people of color in movements against police brutality, the theft of indigenous lands, and racialized mass incarceration, among other struggles. In order to do this work effectively and become true accomplices rather than simply "allies," antiracist white activists need role models—specifically, role models who take risks like Buck did. Antiracist activist and educator Tim Wise also notes that "there is significant resistance to whites' engaging in antiracist activist work because they lack antiracist role models to whom they can look for guidance." Telling Marilyn Buck's story, then, provides white antiracist activists with a needed model for effectively working in solidarity with people of color and developing an antiracist consciousness, along with insights on avoiding activist burnout. In addition, examples such as Buck's remind antiracist activists that they are not working in isolation, but instead, they are working in a tradition of activist ancestors across history.

¹⁷ Miriam Zukas, "Friendship as Oral History: A Feminist Psychologist's View," *Oral History* 21, no. 2 (1993): 73, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40179340>.

and Mariann's friendship, starting with their early family lives in Austin, Texas and Ft. Worth, Texas, respectively. Neither Marilyn nor Mariann considered themselves activists at an early age; both of them adopted their radical beliefs gradually as a result of their identification with the emerging New Left and Black Power movements. After a brief first-year stint at UC Berkeley, Marilyn returned to her hometown of Austin, Texas where she enrolled at the University of Texas and met Mariann Wizard. From celebrating "Gentle Thursdays" with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to taking LSD trips together, Mariann and Marilyn immersed themselves in the surrounding New Left and countercultural milieus and forged a friendship that endured through Marilyn's final days in prison. Marilyn soon departed for the SDS National Office in Chicago, editing *New Left Notes* and further developing the beginnings of her anti-racist, anti-imperialist consciousness.

Chapter 2, "Sisters in the Struggle: A Friendship Endures," documents Marilyn and Mariann's ongoing correspondence and friendship, despite their geographic separation and disparate views. During this period, Marilyn worked in solidarity with the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army in the Bay Area while Mariann remained in Texas and continued her activism in the Austin community. In 1973, Marilyn was arrested in San Francisco for allegedly purchasing ammunition and weapons for the Black Liberation Army under a false name, standing trial in California, Arizona, Texas, and Oregon. Shuttled around between prisons, she eventually landed at Alderson. In 1977, she managed to escape, went underground, and continued her work with the Black Liberation Army. Throughout all of these movements and changes, Marilyn and

Mariann's friendship endured (although they lost contact when Marilyn went underground), and their letters during this period begin to reveal many of the key themes surrounding Marilyn's use of friendship as an activist tool mentioned in the previous section.

And finally, Chapter 3, “‘The Walls Fell Away’: Reflections on Marilyn Buck's Expansive Friendship Network,” details the networks that Marilyn established following the close of her two major trials during the 1980s, along with her reflections on the significance of her near-lifelong friendship with Mariann Wizard. At FCI Dublin, Marilyn transformed herself into a self-described “artist-as-revolutionary,” casting aside the rigid political jargon of her earlier days and using poetry as a means for navigating and overcoming self-censorship. Her activism blossomed during this period, fueled by this new vision of herself—from organizing an AIDS walkathon to teaching yoga classes, Marilyn never seemed to sit down, and she always surrounded herself with friends and supporters. Mariann Wizard and Marilyn continued to correspond and visit, nostalgically reflecting back on their days together in Austin and supporting one another in their personal lives. In July 2010, Marilyn received an early release from prison. Hopeful at first, her supporters were soon saddened to learn that Marilyn had been diagnosed with a rare form of uterine cancer. On her deathbed just two weeks later, Marilyn spent her final days meeting with young activists (sometimes 10-12 a day), passing on her legacy and ensuring that her lifelong commitment to anti-racist, anti-imperialist activism would live on well into the future.

Chapter 1: The Making of a Revolutionary Friendship: Marilyn and Mariann's Early Years

Marilyn Buck and Mariann Wizard, both Texas natives, came from very different childhood backgrounds yet held a key characteristic in common: they both explored radical activism and the closely intertwined countercultural scene upon starting their undergraduate degrees at the University of Texas at Austin. The experiences they shared as members of the UT chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and working on the *Rag*, an underground alternative newspaper, would later bind them together in a supportive, lifelong friendship sustained through letters and visits long after the two of them parted ways geographically.

MARILYN BUCK: FROM POLITICAL AWARENESS TO POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Born in Midland, Texas in 1947, Marilyn Jean Buck was the oldest child (and only daughter) of Louis and Virginia Buck.¹⁸ Louis Buck, an Episcopal minister, played an active role in the Austin, Texas civil rights movement. While northern Episcopal dioceses made efforts to engage with the civil rights movement at the time, clergy members in the South largely continued to support segregation. The Church eventually dismissed Louis Buck and censured him as a result of his activism.¹⁹ Unable to find a job in another diocese, he put his veterinary training to work and opened up a practice just north of the University of Texas at Austin campus.²⁰ Marilyn attended St. Stephen's

¹⁸ Margalit Fox, "Marilyn Buck, Imprisoned for Brink's Holdup, Dies at 62," *New York Times* (New York, NY), 6 August 2010.

¹⁹ Marilyn Buck, "Draft/Wizard 5/2/89," 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

²⁰ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

Episcopal Academy, a private college preparatory school in Austin, and graduated at the top of her class in 1965.

Reflecting back on her childhood, Marilyn described herself as “politically aware” but not “politically active” during this period. Experiencing gender discrimination both at home and at school, she slowly became aware of her own oppression as a woman.²¹ Mariann Wizard notes that Marilyn’s family situation may have played a significant role in her feminist awakening: “[Louis] was a very forceful character, and his wife was—she was the preacher’s wife—she was very self-effacing.”²² Marilyn’s political awareness did not translate into any sort of political action before she left for college. She watched the KKK burn crosses on her family’s lawn and the Johnson administration escalate the Vietnam War, yet she refrained from taking part in either the civil rights movement or the anti-war movement. She explains, “I did nothing. Instead, I wanted to fit in, to be popular, though in one sense I could not be, because of who my father was.”²³

Due to her outstanding grades, Marilyn received a scholarship from UC Berkeley and left for the Bay Area in the fall of 1965. She didn’t attend Berkeley solely because of her scholarship offer, however. Mariann explains that Louis had become aware of the countercultural “scene” surrounding the University of Texas campus as a result of his activism and refused to allow “his precious young daughter to come into contact with

²¹ *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners, Resistance in Brooklyn*, 2002, Abraham Guillen Press: Montreal, Quebec (p. 52).

²² Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

²³ *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners, Resistance in Brooklyn*, 2002, Abraham Guillen Press: Montreal, Quebec (p. 52); Marilyn Buck, “Draft/Wizard 5/2/89,” 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

some of the ‘elements’ therein.”²⁴ (After Mariann raised this point during our interview together, we both started to grin at its seeming absurdity: “So she went to Berkeley, which is hysterical,” Mariann laughed.)²⁵ During her short time at UC Berkeley, Marilyn Buck transformed from an aspiring “woman economist” who was skeptical of the anti-war movement’s effectiveness into an activist who joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), participated in the Free Speech Movement, and “felt at home” with R&B, Bob Dylan, marijuana, and LSD.²⁶ Marilyn acknowledged that the Black Power movement ultimately caught her attention and contributed to her politicization as a UC Berkeley student, although she still considered herself a “liberal” (rather than a “revolutionary”) during this time period. Marilyn explains, “When the Black Power movement emerged from the civil rights movement, raising questions of power, I was vitalized, yanked up out of my chair of skepticism and alienation, and moved to activism.”²⁷

Following her first year at Berkeley in which she gained significant exposure to campus activism, Marilyn made the decision to return home to Austin to enroll as a student at the University of Texas. Marilyn may have returned to Austin partially due to her family’s financial situation. Mariann explains, “[Louis] gave away a lot of stuff as a

²⁴ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Resistance in Brooklyn, *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners*, Montreal, Quebec: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002, 54.; W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” Third Coast (Austin, TX), October 1985.

²⁷ Resistance in Brooklyn, *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners*, Montreal, Quebec: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002, 53.

vet. If people didn't have any money, he would still take care of the animal."²⁸ Marilyn declared a major in Russian and took a work-study job in the library; shortly after classes began, she gravitated toward UT's radical community and became fast friends with Mariann Wizard.²⁹

MARIANN WIZARD: THE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF A YOUNG REPUBLICAN

Mariann Wizard, daughter of Carl and Alma Garner, was born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1946 and grew up in a conservative family. In 1964, after receiving acceptance to attend the University of Texas, she moved to Austin. Unlike Marilyn, Mariann engaged in political activism from the start of her college career. Her politics, however, leaned sharply to the right: she joined the UT Young Republicans during her first year on campus and canvassed for Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election.³⁰ While her eventual transition from the UT Young Republicans to Students for a Democratic Society seems downright perplexing, another aspect of her background offers an explanation for this dramatic change. Mariann admits that she felt an affinity toward Black culture early on, indulging in jazz clubs and consequently interacting with members of Austin's Black community.³¹ Her interest in Black culture led her to feel sympathetic toward the civil rights movement's demands, and she soon decided to quit the Young Republicans.³²

Mariann filled this new void in her schedule by spending time at the Chuckwagon, an Austin establishment that Rossinow describes as "a ramshackle

²⁸ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

²⁹ W. Gardner Selby, "A Soldier's Story," Third Coast (Austin, TX), October 1985.

³⁰ Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998, 168.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

eatery...that was a gathering place for motorcyclists, foreign students, ‘the quasi-beat literati, the drug community such as it existed at that time,’ and others who felt misfits at the football- and fraternity-dominated campus.”³³ One day while lounging in the Chuckwagon and “wasting [her] life,” an activist named Bob Speck approached Mariann and asked if she’d be willing to collate some papers for an anti-war event planned by campus activists.³⁴ Mariann quickly realized that she felt at home among the “political people and weird people” and decided to join the UT chapter of Students for a Democratic Society in 1965.³⁵ Aside from her political awakening, Mariann also began to immerse herself in countercultural lifestyle habits around this time. During the 1960s, Austin served as a transit hub for psychedelic drugs due to its closeness to Mexico. The same year that Mariann joined SDS, she met a folksinger who turned her on to weed, and she quickly became an advocate for its legalization.³⁶

At first glance, Mariann’s political and cultural transformation seems completely unexpected. However, the status of the new left in Austin at the time helps to explain how such a seemingly abrupt shift may have happened. During the 1960s, Austin was the epicenter of new left activism in the South: Austin joined Berkeley, Chicago, and New York as one of the most important new left spaces in the country.³⁷ Doug Rossinow

³³ Ibid., 174.

³⁴ Ibid., 174.

³⁵ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

³⁶ To this day, Mariann remains a cannabis enthusiast, playing an active role in several legalization campaigns around the country and even publishing a hemp cookbook. (She showed up to our first meeting wearing a raggedy pot legalization t-shirt and kindly offered me a copy of her cookbook.) Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998, 257.

³⁷ Ibid., 9.

argues that secular liberalism, Christian existentialism, and Christian liberalism—currents present within broader Texas culture—had an important influence on the development of the new left in Austin.³⁸ The dissident Christian tradition, for example, “communicated to young cold war idealists the ambition to find lives of meaning and authenticity, even as they sought to improve society.”³⁹ Instead of shedding their identities, Rossinow argues, members of the Austin new left “cultivated an alternative Texan identity” that combined beer drinking with “egalitarian, individualistic, aggressive, volatile, and conspiratorial” behaviors and attitudes.”⁴⁰ Mariann Wizard’s upbringing, centered in both Christianity and Texas culture, did not disqualify her from finding a home within the Austin new left scene.

“THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF HIPPIE-ANARCHODOM”: MARIANN AND MARILYN MEET

Shortly after joining SDS in the spring of 1965, Mariann met George Vizard, a fellow new left activist and prominent campus radical, who’d soon become the love of her life. Mariann describes George as one of the “cool people” on campus whom “everybody looked up to and respected.” Even though she was extremely attracted to George’s charisma and intelligence, Mariann assumed that he was completely out of her league and “didn’t even try.” She was quickly proven wrong, however, and the two started dating; then, they moved in together. Tired of constantly lying to “all of the little granny ladies” about their marital status, Mariann and George eventually decided to tie

³⁸ Ibid., 12.

³⁹ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 14.

the knot that spring.⁴¹

Almost a year later—in the late spring of 1966—Marilyn Buck emerged on the scene, fresh from the Bay Area. Mariann explains how they first met: “[George and I] met [Marilyn] when she came back to Austin because she immediately sought out the weirdoes around campus.” In addition to her lighthearted spirit and sense of humor, Mariann found Marilyn’s sense of personal style extremely intriguing. She explains:

She was a West Coast fashion maven. Oh my god. I mean, she was wearing love beads. We didn’t have no *love beads* then [in a drawn-out exaggerated southern accent]. We hadn’t seen no *love beads*. . .and she had these incredible knee-high boots that I coveted. She was a shoe freak. She was a shoe freak her whole life. The woman loved shoes. If the feds had realized that, they probably would have found her a lot earlier. If they had known about the shoes. They could’ve just put that in the description. You know, like no matter what else she’s disguised as—just look at her feet, and she will have some awesome, fine-ass shoes.⁴²

Marilyn and Mariann felt an instant connection, and as Mariann explains, they “liked each other from the get-go.” They rarely talked about politics together, despite the fact that Marilyn joined SDS in 1967 and the two participated actively in the organization.⁴³

Following its adoption of the *Port Huron Statement* in 1962, SDS rose in prominence and eventually became the leading new left organization in the United States.⁴⁴ While most of SDS’ early members participated in the civil rights movement in some capacity, the organization’s “multi-issue” approach “distinguished it from the civil

⁴¹ Mariann was born Mariann Exia Garner. After George Vizard’s death, she began using the pen name “Mariann G. Wizard.” After her divorce from second husband Larry Waterhouse, Mariann legally adopted the name “Mariann G. Wizard.” Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998, 159.

rights liberalism already present on American campuses.”⁴⁵ In 1964, Bob Pardun, a new left activist, announced SDS’ platform to the University of Texas at Austin student body, and the organization soon gained 40 members and a 200-person mailing list.⁴⁶ The membership base and approach of the growing University of Texas SDS chapter stood in stark contrast to the so-called SDS “old guard,” which largely operated in northern cities, such as Ann Arbor, Cambridge, and New York.⁴⁷ In comparison to the “high seriousness” of the old guard, “the Texans were whimsical, sardonic, often angry, and slightly paranoid. ... Along with their ‘decentralist,’ even anarchist bent, the Texas group became known for a culturally libertarian streak.”⁴⁸ This “culturally libertarian streak” translated into a general sympathy for the counterculture, which included an openness to using psychedelic drugs.⁴⁹

Out of SDS’ many activities, Mariann and Marilyn seemed to remember “Gentle Thursday” most fondly—they’d later reflect back nostalgically on their Gentle Thursday participation in the letters that they exchanged. First introduced in the fall of 1966, Gentle Thursday consisted of a free-form, open festival in which participants encouraged one another to share in having simple, relaxing fun. According to Rossinow, Gentle Thursday festivalgoers “blew bubbles, drew peace symbols in chalk on the sidewalks, and generally relaxed for the afternoon.”⁵⁰ Marilyn and Mariann’s participation in Gentle Thursday

⁴⁵ Ibid., 170.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 159.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 166.

⁴⁹ Ibid. In an undated letter, Marilyn actually used this terminology and referred to her time at UT Austin with Mariann as “the good old days of hippie-anarchodom.”

⁵⁰ Ibid., 261-262.

together demonstrates the playful, fun-focused nature of their friendship.

Marilyn and Mariann's association with radical activist groups did not end with SDS, however. The two worked together on the staff of the *Rag*—the first underground newspaper in the South—starting in early 1967.⁵¹ In response to the conservative takeover of the *Daily Texan* (the University of Texas student newspaper), new left activists created the *Rag* in the fall of 1966. Doug Rossinow argues that the *Rag* represents “the most important of the Austin left’s countercultural efforts,” and the paper endured for ten years, despite serious opposition from the University of Texas administration.⁵² The *Rag* archives reveal that Marilyn most often acted as the newspaper’s “Ad Saleswoman,” while Mariann filled the role of “Shitteworker.”⁵³

In addition to their engagement in political activities, Mariann and Marilyn bonded over their shared interest in aspects of the countercultural lifestyle. The two dabbled in LSD and other psychedelics together, and Mariann asserts that they shared a “special bond” due to the fact that she took her first LSD trip in Marilyn’s company:

Somebody had brought [LSD] to Austin, and George had taken a trip three or four weeks before. He did it in the whole way that’s prescribed in *The Doors of*

⁵¹ Ibid., 260; “The Rag: A Member of the Underground Press Syndicate,” *The Rag* (Austin, TX), 30 January 1967.

⁵² Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998, 260.

⁵³ I asked Alice Embree, a prominent member of both Austin’s SDS chapter and the *Rag*, to define the term “Shitteworker.” Here’s her response: “Typing, pasting up copy for the *Rag*, using Presstype to create headlines and then paste them down. Articles had to be typed into columns, then cut with an Xacto blade, glued on one side with rubber cement, then pasted onto layout pages. It was very labor intensive and usually took all night (until dawn) before the paper was ready to be taken to the printer. It was a group effort, not just women, but I would say—from experience—that the typing was predominantly done by women. If the columns were justified, then they were typed twice! Once with “x”s at the end of each line the first time, then extra spaces incorporated into the line the next time. This was before word processing.” “The Rag: Read by the People who are Affected by the Decision Makers of Texas,” *The Rag* (Austin, TX), 27 March 1967; “The Rag: A Weekly Newspaper,” *The Rag* (Austin, TX), 14 November 1966.

Perception. Everything is a very controlled thing. He reported on it. ... Whereas by the time I first did it with Marilyn, we went walking all over the campus. Everybody was like, ‘Wow! Wow!’⁵⁴

To Mariann, this trip represented an important event in the development of their friendship.⁵⁵

Marilyn and Mariann’s carefree days unfortunately didn’t last forever. In the spring of 1967, Mariann introduced Marilyn to fellow activist Bob Pardun: this meeting opened a new window of opportunity for Marilyn in Chicago, causing her to leave behind her newfound community in Austin. Pardun, a mathematics graduate student at the University of Texas, first arrived on the Austin scene with his wife Judy as part of his role establishing SDS chapters across the southwest in conjunction with the national office. Head over heels in love with his wife Judy, Bob soon discovered that she’d become involved with another SDS organizer. Mariann explains, “He was completely blindsided...he thought everything was great...he had no idea.” After watching their friend “mope around” for several weeks, Mariann and George finally decided to stage an intervention. “We were going to go dancing, and we decided that it’d be good for Bob [to join us] because we knew Bob liked dancing,” Mariann explains. “We decided Bob needed a lighthearted person...and we had tripped with Marilyn...so we knew that she was lighthearted as all get out.” Mariann’s tactic worked, and Bob and Marilyn instantly clicked.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

MARILYN LEAVES FOR CHICAGO

Shortly after their introduction, Bob and Marilyn unexpectedly announced to Mariann and George that they planned to depart for Chicago. Mariann explains:

So Bob decided then that he was going to go back to Chicago, back to the SDS national office to work up there, not as an officer but just to work in the office. ...dealing with all of the mail, the phone calls...responding to requests from the chapters and all this stuff that was never done effectively, never done efficiently, never done properly, but sometimes people would at least make a stab at it. And Austin had lost its charm for him with Judy's leaving the scene...and Marilyn said, 'I'm going with him.' And they had known each other like a week! And we're like, 'Um, what?!' And she said, 'I'm going with Bob to Chicago.' And he's all beaming like a cat that swallowed a canary.⁵⁷

Mariann believes that Marilyn viewed Bob as a good teacher and recognized that she had the potential to learn a great deal from simply immersing herself in a new environment.

Mariann notes:

It was just so quick—'What happened?'—you know. But it was the spark—something there was the spark that she needed to say, I'm not going to sit around here in Austin anymore where my parents are and be under their scrutiny. I'm going to go and do some of things I see need to be done. And so she did.⁵⁸

Marilyn made an accurate prediction, and her experience in Chicago proved to be transformative on both a political and personal level.⁵⁹

Even though Mariann remained in Austin and Marilyn relocated to the Midwest, the two friends tried their best to keep in touch amidst the difficulty of communicating at a distance long before the days of cell phones. Shortly after Marilyn left for Chicago, tragedy struck Mariann's life. Her husband George Vizard was murdered during his shift

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

at a local convenience store. To this day, questions remain about the motive of George's killer, Robert Zani. One thing was certain, though: George's death hit the radical community—and the larger UT community as a whole—hard. Following the tragedy, Mariann's mother insisted that she buy a phone, and she began to keep in touch with Marilyn much more regularly. At this time, Mariann also gradually found her political voice and her confidence, and she took on a more involved role in the Austin SDS chapter. Both active in their respective SDS chapters, Marilyn and Mariann would communicate primarily via the SDS office phone (connecting Austin to Chicago), discussing both personal and political news.⁶⁰

Like Mariann, Marilyn also underwent a political transformation during this period. Within just a few months of her arrival in Chicago, she began editing *New Left Notes*, the national SDS newspaper. According to Mariann, “nobody else was freakin’ doing it,” so Marilyn stepped up to the plate.⁶¹ In addition to her role as editor, Marilyn contributed photographs to *New Left Notes*: one of her assignments in a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago ended up having a profound impact on her political consciousness. Marilyn and a fellow SDS member wanted to take a few photographs of a “freedom wall,” or a series of murals created by Black nationalists. Marilyn explains what happened next:

We started taking pictures, and some people in the community came over and said, ‘What are you doing?’ I said: ‘I’m taking pictures. I’m with SDS.’ And they said: ‘You can’t just come in our community and rip off our wall. You can’t just come take pictures.’ The camera was taken away. A young man—I believe a

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

SNCC person—came over, and we resolved the conflict. I gave [them] the film, and I took back my camera. I had to go away and think about that—that other people’s struggles should not be defined by what white people thought they should be. ...It didn’t matter that we were just SDS or an antiwar organization that had relations with SNCC or any other thing.⁶²

Following this encounter, Marilyn’s perspective on the role of white activists in the struggle against racism and imperialism further grew and developed; she constantly reflected upon her positionality throughout her lifelong career as an activist.

Amidst these changes, Mariann and Marilyn still found time to see each other in person, making plans to meet up at the SDS National Convention in Bloomington, Indiana in early 1968. Unfortunately, Mariann came down with an illness on the plane out to Chicago to meet Marilyn, which resulted in Marilyn and Bob having to “carry” her to the meeting. Mariann explains, “I got sick in Chicago. I flew to Chicago, got to Bob and Marilyn’s place—it was winter—and I immediately came down with some hideous respiratory disease. I was running a fever, I was coughing my brains out.”⁶³ Luckily, she received a shot from Indiana Campus Health and felt almost completely normal by the next day. Marilyn and Mariann truly looked out for one another, and this instance demonstrates a pattern of caretaking that would continue long into the future, helping to sustain both their friendship and their activist commitments.⁶⁴

Aside from her feverish arrival, Mariann has few clear memories of the conference. However, she does remember hearing SDS activist Bernadine Dohrn speak and disliking her overall message, a feeling that she shared in common with Marilyn.

⁶² Marilyn Buck, quoted in W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” *Third Coast* (Austin, TX), October 1985.

⁶³ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Marian explained the situation in the following way: “Bernadine obviously knew that she was a very attractive woman and was using that...to kind of insult everyone there who wasn’t ready to pick up the gun, basically. You’re less of a man. And if you weren’t less than a man, you could maybe have some. ...It was really manipulative.”⁶⁵ While Marilyn and Mariann did not share Dohrn’s viewpoint, both of them took strides to infuse feminist consciousness into SDS. Notably, Marilyn was one of the first women to speak on the issue of sexism at an SDS national meeting, having done so at the SDS National Convention in Ann Arbor back in June 1967.⁶⁶ Marilyn explains that the struggle against sexism in SDS constituted a “big battle” for these committed women and that many of them eventually pursued feminist activism in women’s liberation groups.⁶⁷ While committed to feminist principles, Marilyn did not follow the same path; instead, she departed for the Bay Area in 1968 to deepen her commitment to antiracist, anti-imperialist activism.

Despite identifying as feminists, both Mariann and Marilyn prioritized antiracist activism over feminist activism due to the exclusionary practices they observed within mainstream women’s liberation groups. Mariann contends, “At first, I think Marilyn’s reaction was somewhat similar to mine in a lot of ways. ...I kind of had a condescending attitude toward the formative women’s groups, especially the consciousness-raising groups. ...[Marilyn] saw that the women’s movement was not based among Black

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ David Gilbert, *Love and Struggle: My Life in SDS, the Weather Underground, and Beyond*, Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012, 58.

⁶⁷ Susie Day, “Holding on Inside: Political Prisoner Marilyn Buck,” undated, 2003-104 “Marilyn Buck,” 3W214, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

women.”⁶⁸ Of course, Mariann argues that Marilyn was still very much a feminist and recognized the gender discrimination that women faced. Yet she always remained cognizant of the appropriate time and place to use the feminist label to describe herself. If she thought that using the term would cause an argument within a particular community or impede her progress toward advocating for racial equality, she’d strategically avoid using it. “I think she certainly always saw herself as a woman in struggle. She didn’t lose track of that,” Mariann notes.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, October 9, 2015.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 2: Sisters in the Struggle: A Friendship Endures

MARILYN JOINS THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE

Not too long after the SDS conference in Bloomington, Marilyn announced to Mariann that she planned to leave Chicago for the Bay Area. “She said she was done there,” notes Mariann. “She pretty much had done everything that she thought she could do in Chicago. She wanted to go back to California, and she wanted to be back in the Bay Area.”⁷⁰ It was late spring of 1968, and having broken things off with Bob Pardun, Marilyn felt that she needed a new direction, a new way to work “directly with oppressed citizens.”⁷¹ Perhaps she felt disenchanted with SDS’ organizing tactics and wanted to take her activism to the next level. Reflecting on her participation in the October 1967 March on the Pentagon—a protest event drawing crowds of over 100,000 people and the largest in decades—Marilyn admitted the following: “One of the lessons I took away from that was that we had to go beyond sitting-in and demonstrating. We had to find ways to fight back more militantly.”⁷² Protestors marched from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon that day, with some activists even attempting to “levitate” the Pentagon. Marilyn saw a need to move beyond nonviolent civil disobedience toward more militant action. In light of these comments, Marilyn’s decision to move out to the Bay and her subsequent choice to begin working in solidarity with the Black liberation struggle make sense.

⁷⁰ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁷¹ W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” Third Coast (Austin, TX), October 1985.

⁷² Ibid.

In addition to starting work as an organizer for San Francisco Newsreel, a radical filmmaking collective, and joining the editorial staff of *The Movement*, SNCC's newspaper, Marilyn began supporting the Bay Area Black Panther Party (BPP). Her attendance at a Black Panther Party rally in San Francisco that spring galvanized her to become an active supporter of the Black liberation struggle. Discussing this event during an interview with *Third Coast* newspaper in 1985, Marilyn noted, "I was overwhelmed by the militancy [of Panther speakers at the rally]. About the fact of black people talking about defending themselves by taking up arms. And I thought that made perfect sense."⁷³

The Black Panther Party (BPP), one of the most important radical organizations in United States history, operated from 1966 to 1982 as the largest "revolutionary nationalist organization of the Black Liberation Movement."⁷⁴ The BPP drew on a longstanding tradition of minority groups using performative tactics as a means for securing opportunity and agency. Nikhil Singh argues that the Panthers enacted "an insurgent form of visibility, a literal-minded and deadly serious kind of guerilla theater, in which militant sloganeering, bodily display, and spectacular actions simultaneously signified their possession and yet real lack of power."⁷⁵ While the Panthers carried guns and crafted a militant image, they did not actually pose a serious threat to the state due to their limited numbers and resources.⁷⁶ Yet, as Singh mentions, the Panthers still managed

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Akinyele Umoja, "Repression Breeds Resistance: The Black Liberation Army and the Radical Legacy of the Black Panther Party," *New Political Science* 21, no. 2 (1999): 138, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cnps20>.

⁷⁵ Nikhil P. Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, 203.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 202.

to engender “a massive retaliatory response from federal and local police agencies” as a result of their leveraging of performative tactics.⁷⁷

Unfortunately, Black liberation groups such as the Black Panther Party faced extreme violence and repression at the hands of the FBI, with J. Edgar Hoover declaring the Black Panther Party to be “the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States” and creating COINTELPRO-“Black Nationalist/Hate Groups” in 1968. During 1969 alone, the FBI raided more than 13 BPP offices across the country; by the end of the year, “30 Panthers were facing capital punishment, 40 faced life in prison, 55 faced terms up to thirty years, and another 155 were in jail or being sought” as a result of the FBI’s attempt to demolish the BPP.⁷⁸ COINTELPRO repression against Black liberation movement groups resulted in the development of a reformist wing of the Black Panther Party; however, another faction of the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army (BLA), responded to the FBI’s “counter-insurgency strategy to destroy the Party and the Black liberation movement” by relocating its activities underground. During the 1970s, the BLA not only functioned as an “urban guerilla force,” but it also operated as an underground railroad to protect members being pursued by the FBI and/or the police and provided care to wounded comrades via “clandestine medical units.”⁷⁹

After the fracturing of the Black Panther Party, Marilyn began working clandestinely with the Black Liberation Army, procuring false passports and drivers’

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Akinyele Umoja, “Repression Breeds Resistance: The Black Liberation Army and the Radical Legacy of the Black Panther Party,” *New Political Science* 21, no. 2 (1999): 138, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cnps20>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

licenses, weapons, ammunition, and safe houses for the group.⁸⁰ According to Mariann, Marilyn traveled around to various gun shows to obtain these items for the BLA. She notes that they never discussed this at any point during their friendship, and Marilyn did not speak a word about it to anyone whom Mariann knew, either. I asked Mariann if Marilyn used her appearance to her advantage when buying guns, and she gave me the following response:

She could go in and say, ‘Well, I think we’d like a case of those’ [in a high-pitched southern accent]. And they’d say, ‘That’s fine, will you be paying cash for that?’ ‘Yeah.’ And just like that, nobody batted an eyelash. ...I mean, no matter how many love beads she put on, she was Episcopalian—she just looked so white. ...She’s a minister’s daughter. She knows how to behave. She knows how to act. And she knows how to tell people things with a smile that makes them want to do what she says or else they’ll feel dirty.⁸¹

Marilyn saw herself primarily as a support person within the movement, making every possible contribution that she could from behind the scenes.⁸²

THERE FOR EACH OTHER: MARILYN AND MARIANN REMAIN CLOSE DESPITE THEIR DISTANCE

While Marilyn worked tirelessly for Black liberation in the Bay Area, Mariann amped up her role with SDS in Austin, in addition to joining the United Community Front, an East Austin Black liberation group. During this time period, Mariann admits that she and Marilyn found it difficult to stay in touch. “I really didn’t hear from her much. And a lot of the communication was not even direct. Somebody would go out to San Francisco for a week, and they’d come back. And you’d see them, and they’d say

⁸⁰ Joseph B. Treaster, “Marilyn Buck: A Fugitive and a Long Radical,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), 23 October, 1981.

⁸¹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁸² *Ibid.*

who all they saw,” Mariann notes.⁸³ Despite their infrequent contact, Marilyn and Mariann always felt that they had a connection. According to Mariann, “I never felt like I had to stay in touch with [Marilyn] on a real regular basis. I felt like I would be there for her, and she would be there for me.”⁸⁴ Even excerpts from the letters that they exchanged during this period seem to verify Mariann’s contention:

What’s happening in the old town. Nothing happening here worth mentioning. But I wanted to let you know you’re still in my heart and mind. Even when I don’t write.⁸⁵

Mariann, sister love. . . .I hope you’re going to be around through Xmas cause I’m getting in town around the 15th till about the 26th. So please be around so I can see you. You can call me at my parents’ house, although I’ll try to get a ride together.⁸⁶

The pair’s ability to remain close, even while separated by a huge geographical distance, would endure and remain powerful throughout the later years of their friendship, binding them together despite their many life changes.

Mariann reports that she managed to visit Marilyn in person twice during this time period, and while she doesn’t remember the exact dates, it seems as though these visits took place while she was working aboveground with the Panthers (before she started engaging in clandestine activity with the Black Liberation Army): “But I did see that with Marilyn, with her house, she was much more involved with the Black movement at that time. She was already involved in the things that took her to prison. But

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, July 1968, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

⁸⁶ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, December 1968, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

we never talked about it.”⁸⁷ Mariann’s admission that the two didn’t talk about her Black liberation activism during this time period is significant considering the communication pattern that the two would maintain in the future. During Marilyn’s later imprisonment (she spent most of her adult life behind the wall), Mariann always tried to keep her correspondence light. She never judged Marilyn (even though the majority of her friends and family did) and wanted to remind her to laugh and find joy in life’s simple pleasures. Mariann’s commentary on her second visit to see Marilyn in San Francisco shows that their friendship gave both women a space for release from the stress of constant activist struggle: “But then we spent a lot of time together when...she wasn’t working—we spent a lot of time together tramping around, showing me around the city. Sometimes we’d go out to eat—different cheap little places. We had a lot of fun.”⁸⁸

In the spring of 1969, Mariann started dating Larry Waterhouse, a prominent anti-war leader on the University of Texas at Austin campus who decided to run for student body president. Mariann and Larry worked together to build a base of support for his campaign, and Larry’s persuasiveness coupled with his willingness to talk with fraternities and sororities caused his popularity to quickly surge. It soon became clear that the student body would overwhelmingly elect Larry. Then, without warning, everything changed: the military drafted Larry out of graduate school, forcing him to withdraw from the race and leave Austin immediately. At the end of the summer, Mariann and Larry married and moved out to Fort Ord, California together. (According to Mariann, they did

⁸⁷ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

it largely to allow her to claim military dependent status and obtain a pay raise.)⁸⁹ The military soon became aware of Larry's political convictions and assigned him to a desk job, as Mariann explains:

There's some point when they say, 'Soldier, if we send you to Vietnam, what are you going to do?' And he said, 'I'm going to pick up a gun and try to kill you, and I'm going to run away and join the enemy.' So they said, 'Well, we're not going to send you to Vietnam, college boy, we're going to make you head of the finance section.' He cut payroll every month. He did the payroll for everybody on the post—that was his job. ...He was a buck private the entire time he was in. He never even got a single stripe. He got his sharpshooter medal. And that's it.⁹⁰

Both Mariann and Larry joined the Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM), an antiracist group of servicemembers dedicated to destroying the military machine from the inside out. Mariann made a few brief trips back to Austin during this time period, and while she was away, Marilyn Buck would sometimes come out to Fort Ord to take Larry out to dinner. During one of our interviews, Mariann chuckled and noted, "It allowed Larry to take a break from the military and talk about something intelligent for a change."⁹¹

At the beginning of 1972, Mariann and Larry signed a contract to write a book about the GI movement. The next morning, Larry received word from Fort Ord that he'd been thrown out: they'd already found out about the book and subsequently discharged him. Following the news, the two made their way back to Texas to finish the book. After sleeping on friends' couches for a few months, Mariann and Larry got lucky. "It was the time of the great exodus out to the country—when all of the hippies were giving

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

up on politics,” Mariann remembers, and she and Larry moved into a beautiful house formerly occupied by their “hippie-turned-luddite” friends.⁹²

“THE ONLY WHITE MEMBER” OF THE BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

The phone rang one afternoon in 1973, and Mariann walked into the kitchen to pick it up. She’s not exactly sure who called her that day—likely an activist friend out in the Bay Area—but they informed her that Marilyn had been arrested in San Francisco and charged with federal crimes in California, New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and Oregon. Just 26 years old at the time, Marilyn found herself caught up in the tangled web of the then-emerging prison industrial complex and the FBI’s war against supporters of Black liberation.⁹³ In a rough draft of a personal narrative that she wrote for Mariann in 1989, Marilyn explains what happened on that fateful day:

Because of my support for Black liberation, I became a COINTELPRO target. The FBI accused me of being the ‘only white member’ of the Black Liberation Army. . . . San Francisco police and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents raided a friend’s home where I was staying. The ammunition I was accused of buying was found in the course of an illegal search of the house. The police threatened me with death; they also said they would kidnap and harm my friend’s two children if I did not cooperate with them, denounce my political allies and beliefs, and work for the government. Bail was set at \$100,000 cash, which I could not obtain.⁹⁴

Of course, Marilyn was not the only white activist who supported the Black liberation struggle; she argued, however, that a white woman supporting Black people is

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Marilyn Buck, “Draft/Wizard 5/2/89,” 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

“threatening to the government.”⁹⁵ She explains, “They wanted to look at me, or any other white person who supports national independence for the New African Afro-American nation, and say, ‘This is an aberration—this is an exception.’”⁹⁶

Throughout her many trials, the United States government held Marilyn in a series of jails and prisons around the country, with Cook County Jail in Chicago serving as her central location between trials. I asked Mariann why they chose Chicago of all places to hold Marilyn, and she said, “Because it’s far away from any of her friends or family. And when she was on trial here [in Texas], they took her every night to the Bexar County Jail in San Antonio to lock her up. They wouldn’t even keep her here locally. Who the hell knows what they were worried about.”⁹⁷ Mariann visited Marilyn in the Bexar County Jail and attended three or four days of her trial. While the Texas judge dismissed her case, she ultimately received concurrent five- and ten-year prison terms after being convicted in both California and Arizona of “using an alias to buy guns and two boxes of ammunition.”⁹⁸ Marilyn received an excessively harsh sentence for her specific offense, and in her draft personal narrative, she explains, “I was eventually sentenced to 10 years in prison, the longest sentence ever handed out, up until that time, for such an offense. (The usual sentence for this offense would be probation.)”⁹⁹ Her lawyer at the time, Susan B. Jordan, also quipped that Marilyn received one year in

⁹⁵ Kelley Ellsworth, “Interview: Resistance Conspiracy Case,” *Off Our Backs* 19, no. 5 (May 1989): 20-21.

⁹⁶ W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” *Third Coast* (Austin, TX), October 1985.

⁹⁷ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

⁹⁸ W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” *Third Coast* (Austin, TX), October 1985.

⁹⁹ Marilyn Buck, “Draft/Wizard 5/2/89,” 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

prison for every ten bullets that she purchased.¹⁰⁰

The prison-industrial complex (PIC) plays a major role in explaining the mechanism by which the state sought to “neutralize” and disappear radical activists such as Marilyn Buck via imprisonment. Angela Davis explains the meaning behind the term “prison-industrial complex” in the following way: “Because of the extent to which prison building and operation began to attract vast amounts of capital...in a way that recalled the emergence of the military industrial complex, we began to refer to a ‘prison-industrial complex.’”¹⁰¹ Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s account of “moral and economic panic” maps out the rise of the prison-industrial complex during the 20th century. During and following the COINTELPRO era, the state misrepresented and attempted to discredit radical activists, especially radical activists of color, in order to manufacture a “social crisis,” targeting and imprisoning these individuals as part of its resulting “law and order campaign.”¹⁰² Gilmore argues that moral panic over “criminality” (generated in large part by Nixon’s 1968 “law and order” campaign platform) and economic panic combined to produce an overall “crisis” that the state used prisons to “fix.”¹⁰³ According to Gilmore, prison expansion in the United States represents the state’s “solution to socio-economic problems,” stemming from the convolutions of globalization, including surpluses generated by the fall of military Keynesianism.¹⁰⁴

With her trials coming to a close, Marilyn received a transfer to Alderson

¹⁰⁰ W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” *Third Coast* (Austin, TX), October 1985.

¹⁰¹ Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2003.

¹⁰² Ruth W. Gilmore, “Globalisation and U.S Prison Growth: From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism,” *Race & Class*, 40 (1998): 171-188, <http://rac.sagepub.com>.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 174.

Penitentiary for Women in Alderson, West Virginia on September 20th, 1974.¹⁰⁵

Compared with other institutions, many prisoners considered Alderson to be a fairly lax place (with features such as dormitory-style housing and grounds access). Upon Marilyn's arrival, however, the Correctional Officers immediately assigned her to the Control Unit where she lived in isolation and received none of these privileges.¹⁰⁶ When her lawyer questioned the warden about Marilyn's harsh treatment despite the fact that she had no behavioral record whatsoever, the warden replied, "She's a troublemaker. She gets the other girls all riled up with her ideas. I know what that girl reads."¹⁰⁷ Marilyn remained in the Alderson Control Unit for over a year before she finally gained release into the general population.¹⁰⁸

MARIANN AND MARILYN BEGIN TO CORRESPOND REGULARLY

Despite the intense repression that Marilyn faced—such as having her mail frequently censored—Mariann and Marilyn began corresponding on a regular basis. While the pair had in the past encountered some difficulty staying in touch, Marilyn's new reality suddenly made sustained communication more important (and easier to maintain) for both of them. At the time, Mariann knew that the Control Unit was taking a toll on Marilyn, and notes, "I was very distressed by the first letters that I had from her. And I knew that her letters were censored."¹⁰⁹ After perusing Mariann's collection of

¹⁰⁵ Susan B. Jordan, "The Trials of Marilyn Buck," *The Conspiracy* 5 (1975): 5.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Marilyn Buck, "Draft/Wizard 5/2/89," 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁰⁹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

letters held in the Briscoe Center for American History archive, I noticed that Marilyn's letters from the 1970s all seemed to follow a very similar format. First, she'd open with a few remarks about the pair's communication status, such as "Sorry for the delay," or "Why haven't you written lately?" Next, she'd update Mariann on the current status of her appeals cases or her location within the prison (without making any complaints about her condition). And finally, she'd close with a discussion of current events and how they related to the struggle for Third World liberation (oftentimes encouraging Mariann to further her involvement in the struggle).

Marilyn's strong commitment to antiracist, anti-imperialist activism is clearly visible in her standard letter format. She'd constantly ask Mariann for information and materials on current events so that she could stay up to date on liberation struggles happening around the globe. For example, here's an excerpt from a letter that she wrote to Mariann on July 8th, 1975:

I am trying to keep up with current events. Looks to me like this imperialist warmonger is trying to provoke the second qualitative war in Korea. ...And what is happening in India? ...Tell me your view on Portugal and the changes which have been going down there.¹¹⁰

In addition to her correspondence, Marilyn's activism at Alderson also demonstrated her unwavering commitment to her principles. Marilyn soon saw the effects of the war on drugs on the Alderson population, and the high rate of illiteracy among prisoners shocked and horrified her. She began teaching other prisoners how to read, in addition to helping

¹¹⁰ The term "behind the wall" is a slang term simply meaning "in prison" used by both prisoners and anti-prison activists. Mariann did everything that she could to keep Marilyn in the loop, although she knew that her letters containing this information could quite possibly be censored by prison officials. Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 8 July 1975, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Spanish-speaking prisoners negotiate the English-speaking system. She'd sustain this work for the rest of her days behind the wall.¹¹¹

Reflecting back on her years at Alderson, Marilyn later admitted that the censorship she faced and her resulting struggle with her own identity affected how she conveyed her ideas, both in the letters that she sent to supporters and the literary pieces that she wrote. During our interviews together, Mariann expressed very similar sentiments, noting that Marilyn's letters were "full of jargon." I asked her to explain what she meant, and Mariann replied:

Movement jargon. And ultra-left, extremist jargon. I mean, you could've just copied the—she wasn't a Maoist—but if you copied Mao's Little Red Book and put it in a letter, it would've been very similar. It was all about the Proletariat this...oh my god. And the imperialist pigs this. And she's writing this in part for her jailors to read. To see that her spirit is unbroken.¹¹²

Looking through the letters that Marilyn wrote to Mariann during this time period, I stumbled across several that fit the bill:

"Ah well, we shall keep on keeping on, and with the right actions, this nightmare of humanity will be qualitatively changed to the new day."¹¹³

"In these times of rot and decay in Babylon, chaos and the madness of rabid dogs is to be expected. Then to understand and be prepared to survive and defend against it is the task. And we get older and stronger and younger and stronger. So let's just keep on keeping on. Till victory."¹¹⁴

Marilyn confirms this trend in the master's thesis that she wrote in 1997 to obtain a degree in Poetics from the New College of California. In her thesis, Marilyn notes that

¹¹¹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 31 January 1974, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹¹⁴ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 17 January 1974, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

she lacked an “authentic internal voice,” and instead, her writing came across as “stiff and rhetorical.” She explains that she faced ongoing, relentless attacks to her identity, and as a result, she felt “compelled to become even more strongly wrapped in that identification.” “It is an easier path to fortify one’s self-definition than to open the gates and expand one’s boundaries when the enemy has laid siege,” Marilyn notes.¹¹⁵ One of Marilyn’s letters that she sent to Mariann further verifies the censorship that she faced: she notes that the Correctional Officers at Alderson had started denying prisoners access to “bibles and church bulletins sent from home,” so one can imagine how they handled her materials.¹¹⁶ As a means for dealing with this censorship, Marilyn eventually turned to poetry, a literary form that she’d embrace for the rest of her life as a result of its ability to allow her to speak “sparely, but flagrantly.”¹¹⁷

Despite Marilyn’s reliance upon jargon, Mariann stayed by her side, doing what she could to keep her letters light and full of joy in order to counteract the stark reality that Marilyn faced. Mariann explains, “I saw my job as her friend and correspondent on the outside. To keep her in touch with freedom. And with laughter. And with some degree of whatever normalcy was. After my son was born, for instance, she got pictures. She got all the news of baby. You know—bored to tears. But she loved it.”¹¹⁸ The pair would maintain this correspondence pattern for the rest of their lives, with Mariann

¹¹⁵ Marilyn Buck, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination,” Master’s thesis, New College of California, 1999.

¹¹⁶ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 23 January 1977, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹¹⁷ Marilyn Buck, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination,” Master’s thesis, New College of California, 1999.

¹¹⁸ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

always striving to update Marilyn on the humor that she so easily saw in life's mundane activities. Working with Mariann over the course of a year, I constantly found myself laughing hysterically at Mariann's sense of humor and her storytelling abilities: if I walked into an interview feeling stressed from the pressures of graduate school, I usually left with a new sense of optimism and happiness. Mariann tends to downplay the importance of her communication with Marilyn, yet I've seen firsthand how easily she can transform someone's outlook.

Marilyn faced a high level of stress and loneliness, yet Mariann realized the need to provide her with an outlet to vent her frustrations and reflect upon her ideas. In his analysis of key strategies for maintaining activist commitments, Loeb maintains, "We all need opportunities to share our concerns and apprehensions, our hopes and desires."¹¹⁹ Mariann's correspondence with Marilyn also had value because, at the time, few other people on the outside corresponded with Marilyn. Many of Marilyn's family members and former friends cut off communication with her, and even the women's movement for the most part failed to support her. An article appearing in a 1974 issue of the *Berkeley Barb* explains this occurrence:

But on the whole, the women's movement here and across the country has not supported Marilyn. She feels a lot of sorrow and bitterness about her isolation, and she attributed it to her support of Black and Third World revolution. She said, 'A lot of people in the US can support that in Uruguay or Mozambique, but not here.' ...She said that very few people outside ever write to her. Almost all of her mail is from other POWs all over the US.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2010, 80.

¹²⁰ "Marilyn Buck on 15-Year Rap: A Woman Prisoner of War," *Berkeley Barb* 20, no. 11 (1974): 9.

Mariann Wizard was perhaps one of a handful of supporters outside the wall who regularly corresponded with Marilyn, and Marilyn frequently acknowledged how much Mariann's support meant to her. Like other trends seen in their letters, this one would also remain constant over the years. Letter excerpts such as these illustrate the value that Mariann's friendship held:

You know that you remain dear to my heart. And although we have different ideological contradictions, I got to say that you have been much more positive about your 'adventurous' (smile) comrade sister than a whole lot who talk loud and say nothing!! So I remain your sister in the struggle.¹²¹

I know you are probably busy, but do drop me a line, even if it is only a hi there. You know you got a permanent place in my heart, going from way back when (the good old days??).¹²²

More than anything, Mariann believed in Marilyn. She looked past her prison record and the rumors circulating about her at the time and saw a compassionate, caring activist committed to justice and a friend who loved to laugh. Loeb points to the importance of having a strong supporter like Mariann for an activist's evasion of burnout. He explains, "Sometimes, the difference between staying in a movement and dropping out can be as simple as people who believe in us."¹²³ Mariann acted as a consistent voice in Marilyn's life who never judged and always extended an open ear.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 23 February 1975, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹²² Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 23 April 1975, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹²³ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2010, 272.

¹²⁴ Mariann and Marilyn would talk on the phone regularly in addition to exchanging letters. She always answered Marilyn's calls, despite the fact that she called collect, oftentimes at odd hours. Mariann explains, "And then we would talk on the phone, too. She would call me collect, I think was the only way she could call at that time. Because we would always accept her calls. I would say, 'Yes, you can call me anytime

MARILYN GOES UNDERGROUND: 1977-1985

And then, without warning, Marilyn went underground in June of 1977. Despite receiving strong recommendations from her Correctional Officers due to good behavior, the parole board repeatedly denied Marilyn's application. Finally, four and a half years into her sentence, Marilyn managed to secure a weekend furlough to meet with her lawyers in New York.¹²⁵ After consulting with her lawyer Susan Tipograph at her apartment, Marilyn Buck fled, failing to return to Alderson. The FBI immediately issued a warrant for her arrest and placed her on its "most wanted" list.¹²⁶ It'd be years before Mariann and Marilyn would be able to speak again.

you want to call." Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹²⁵ Mariann explained that a furlough is essentially a weekend "pass," after which a prisoner is supposed to return the penitentiary.

¹²⁶ Marilyn Buck, "Draft/Wizard 5/2/89," 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Chapter 3: “The Walls Fell Away”: Reflections on Marilyn Buck’s Expansive Friendship Network

MAY 1985: MARILYN BUCK RESURFACES

On May 11th, 1985, ten unmarked FBI cars and vans converged on Marilyn Buck and Linda Sue Evans—a fellow comrade and Austinite who’d played an integral role in the development of Austin’s women’s and lesbian movements—outside of a diner in Dobbs Ferry, New York.¹²⁷ Marilyn had been working clandestinely in support of Black and Third World liberation movements since her escape from prison back in 1977. She assisted in notable Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur’s escape from prison on November 2nd, 1979, in addition to participating in several robberies (including the failed October 1981 Brink’s robbery) as a means for protesting “racial injustice and United States imperialism” and furthering “the struggle of Black (New Afrikan) people for independence from U.S. colonial domination.”¹²⁸

After placing Marilyn on the FBI’s “most wanted” list for a second time for her suspected role as a getaway car driver in the 1981 Brink’s robbery, the FBI launched a massive manhunt, which eventually led to her capture.¹²⁹ On May 13th, 1985, Marilyn was charged with “conspiracy to violate the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt

¹²⁷ The 1981 Brink’s robbery involved a coalition of Weather Underground and Black Liberation Army members. The group attempted to rob a Brink’s armored car (transporting \$1.6 million dollars) parked at a mall in Nyack, NY. The robbery resulted in the death of a Brinks guard and two Nyack police officers. Marilyn Buck, “Draft/Wizard 5/2/89,” 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; Robert McFadden, “Fugitive in \$1.6 Million Brink’s Holdup Captured,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), 12 May 1985.

¹²⁸ “Obituaries: Marilyn Buck,” *Fellowship*, 76, no. 10 (2011): 42-43; “Marilyn Buck, “Draft/Wizard 5/2/89,” 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹²⁹ W. Gardner Selby, “A Soldier’s Story,” *Third Coast* (Austin, TX), October 1985.

Organizations Act ('RICO'), participation in a racketeering enterprise, bank robbery, armed bank robbery, and bank robbery murder"; she refused to enter a plea and was held without bail at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in New York.¹³⁰ Following the conclusion of her trial on May 11th, 1988, she was convicted of all charges and received a 50-year prison sentence to be served after completing her existing 20-year sentence (5 years for her escape from Alderson and 15 years for her initial ammunition purchasing trials).¹³¹ Marilyn now essentially faced a lifetime behind bars.

Just two weeks later (two days before the statute of limitations expired), a federal judge arraigned Marilyn and five other anti-imperialist activists on charges of conspiracy to "oppose, obstruct, or change the foreign and domestic policies of the U.S. Government through violent and illegal means" in what became known as the "Resistance Conspiracy Trial."¹³² Between 1982-1985, several clandestine radical organizations undertook bombings against U.S. institutions responsible for "war and aggression" as a show of solidarity with "the nations and peoples under attack by the U.S., such as the people of South Africa, Central America, Puerto Rico, Grenada, Palestine, and Black/New Afrikan people within the U.S. itself."¹³³ They strategically executed the bombings during the night and made warning calls to avoid any loss of human life; no one was injured during

¹³⁰ Revolting Lesbians, "Marilyn Buck," in *Political Women Prisoners in the U.S.*, May 1988, 12-13. San Francisco, CA: Revolting Lesbians, May 1988.

¹³¹ Jill Elijah, "Brief," June 1988, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹³² Committee to Fight Repression, "Six Political Prisoners Arraigned in D.C.: Major Conspiracy Trial Ahead," (New York, NY), 1988, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹³³ Ibid.

the attacks.¹³⁴ While the U.S. government admitted during the trial to not knowing exactly who carried out the bombings, the jury sentenced Marilyn to an additional ten years in prison, making her grand total now 80 years.¹³⁵

MARILYN AND MARIANN RECONNECT

Shortly after the FBI arrested Marilyn in 1985, someone called Mariann to inform her of the situation and to let her know that Marilyn would like to speak with her.

Mariann had changed her phone number since she last communicated with Marilyn, and she told the person calling (she's not exactly sure who called her) to give her the number.

Mariann deeply missed Marilyn during the period in which they lost contact, and she felt relieved when she finally found out how she could get in touch with her again. She

explains, "It was so good just to talk with her again and hear her voice. And I was always kind of ashamed of that. I certainly wasn't glad she'd been arrested, but I was glad to be

able to talk with her and have my friend back. I missed her terribly."¹³⁶ Because of

Mariann's political history, Marilyn knew that she was "too hot" and "too public" to contact for help while she worked underground.¹³⁷ Marilyn later explained in a draft

personal narrative that many people around the country, especially women, endured

"harrowing experiences at the hands of FBI agents and others" who were searching for

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Washington Area Committee for Political Prisoner's Rights, "Stop Government Repression: Remove the Bulletproof Wall and the Surveillance Cameras," Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin; Washington Area Committee for Political Prisoner's Rights, "Dear Resistance Conspiracy Case Supporters," 29 January, 1991, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹³⁶ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

her.¹³⁸ Mariann Wizard was certainly no exception to the trend, yet like most other aspects of her life story, she infuses her sense of humor into her memories of these encounters. She recalls the annual visit that she received from the FBI during Marilyn's time underground in the following way:

The only contact that I had with [Marilyn] was once a year when the FBI knocked on my door, wherever the hell I was living, to let me know that they knew where that was. And they asked me, 'Well, have you heard from Marilyn Buck?' [in a very slow, drawn-out southern accent] And I would say, 'Oh yeah. Sure. She writes to me every week, idiots. Why don't you put a mail cover on me, and that way, you can steal the letters.' 'Why don't you do this or that.' What is wrong with you people?! I mean, you have my phone tapped...'139

While Mariann now laughs about her exchanges with the FBI, she admits that she was "scared to death for Marilyn" at the time.¹⁴⁰ Looking back on her history, she regrets never having the opportunity to talk with Marilyn about any of her adventures underground.¹⁴¹

Mariann and Marilyn began corresponding regularly following her capture in 1985: Mariann edited press releases and pamphlets related to Marilyn's trials, mobilized former SDS members to provide both monetary and moral support, and visited her at Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York.¹⁴² For example, in a letter dated May 16th, 1988, Marilyn sent the following message to Mariann:

I seriously want you to give thought to how you would approach dealing with this

¹³⁸ "Marilyn Buck, "Draft/Wizard 5/2/89," 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹³⁹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Mariann Wizard has worked for most of her life as a freelance editor and writer; she'd oftentimes give Marilyn her feedback on pamphlets and personal writing. Ibid.

case. (I'm enclosing the indictment so you will see the extent...)¹⁴³

At Marilyn's request, Mariann even wrote a letter to the RICO case judge to request leniency in sentencing:

I earnestly suggest a minimum sentence in a mild correctional institute, with full access to books and correspondence and the possibility of parole, as your most humane course. Or, if the State cannot tolerate the prisoner, it should declare her stateless and exile her to some country that would accept her. (In my heart of hearts, I wish that you could somehow send Marilyn to Austin, where people who love and value her would help her find productive work for positive change.)¹⁴⁴

Here, we see evidence of the sense of nostalgia that Marilyn and Mariann shared for their history together back in Austin, a pattern that became more and more pronounced as the years wore on. Mariann's wish that the judge would just send Marilyn back to Austin also reveals a hint of sadness, perhaps stemming from her realization that the two would likely never share another day together in Austin again.

Following the close of the "Resistance Conspiracy Trial" (in which she was given a 10-year sentence), Marilyn received a transfer to the Federal Correctional Institution, Marianna, in Florida.¹⁴⁵ Marilyn's commitment to her activist principles continued to shine bright during this period, despite the horrific conditions that she faced at Marianna and her diagnosis with thyroid cancer. For example, in a letter to Mariann dated September 3rd, 1989, Marilyn just briefly mentions the recent surgery she underwent to have her entire thyroid removed before proceeding to discuss the two articles on

¹⁴³ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 16 May 1988, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁴⁴ Mariann Wizard to Charles S. Haight, Jr., 7 May 1988, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁴⁵ Washington Area Committee for Political Prisoner's Rights, "Dear Resistance Conspiracy Case Supporters," 29 January, 1991, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

socialism, a Brecht poem, and a political leaflet that she enclosed in great detail.¹⁴⁶ After relentless efforts to get her custody level changed from maximum to medium, Marilyn obtained a transfer to Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin, a medium-security prison in the Bay Area, in 1994.¹⁴⁷ Here, Marilyn substantially expanded her support network, engaged in multiple forms of activism, and transformed into an “artist-as-revolutionary,” rather than continuing to embrace the political jargon of her earlier days.

MARILYN’S REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

As soon as Marilyn arrived at FCI Dublin, she immersed herself in the variety of programming available to prisoners. Her involvement in this programming, which allowed her to build her social network within the space of the prison, along with her correspondence with supporters such as Mariann and others outside of prison walls, gave her the space that she needed to reassess her formerly censored self and to reshape her identity. For example, Marilyn immediately got involved in the production of a play, taking on a major role. In a later reflection on her transformation, she noted that her involvement in this experience allowed her to “recognize the ways in which she’d repressed creativity.”¹⁴⁸ She joined a creative voice workshop, which convinced her to begin to write poetry again, something she’d done at MCC but stopped at FCI Marianna due to the detrimental effects that the repressive conditions had on her poetic voice.¹⁴⁹ Eventually, Marilyn began performing her poetry publicly, sending out her poems for

¹⁴⁶ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 3 September 1989, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁴⁷ Marilyn Buck, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination,” Master’s thesis, New College of California, 1999, 20.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

publication, and corresponding with hundreds of young poets around the world. Mariann explains:

My god—I mean, she corresponded with hundreds of people. People would write to her—of course, her name and address started getting published in all these publications. Somebody would write her and say, ‘I saw your poem. It was really nice. I’m a poet, too, but not a very good one.’ And she’d write back and say, ‘I bet you are a good poet. I’d love to see some of your stuff.’ And it’d just be some stranger from somewhere. And they’d send her their stuff. And she’d critique it. She’d critique it in the most gentle, and yet, pointed way possible.¹⁵⁰

Marilyn’s correspondence with aspiring poets and supporters also gave her the space to try on and reflect upon her changing identity. Mariann argues that Marilyn’s political ideas and modes of analysis seeped into nearly every letter that she wrote.¹⁵¹

Eventually, Marilyn came to the conclusion that she must be an artist in order to be a revolutionary. She enrolled in a master’s degree program through the New College of California, completing an MA in Poetics under the supervision of former Beat poet David Meltzer.¹⁵² In her thesis, entitled, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination,” Marilyn concludes:

From my own experience as a revolutionary, I had learned that there is a process that is involved in consciously creating a revolutionary cultural shift that would change the face of civilization. Political speeches, leaflets, and pamphlets that exhort and condemn the old, oppressive order rarely do that. The artist, as creator, creates the concept and framework for a different cultural paradigm. Artists and writers are teachers of vision, of listening and of changing cultural and social demands and expectations. Without imagination, there is little that dares to confront the old.¹⁵³

Clearly, Marilyn had cast aside her former identity based on rigid jargon and moved to a

¹⁵⁰ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Marilyn Buck, “On Becoming a Poet and Artist: Beyond Censorship to Reimagination,” Master’s thesis, New College of California, 1999, 11.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 20.

new one based around the revolutionary power of artistic vision. Moving beyond the censorship that she faced, Marilyn took a risk and expressed more of who she was through poetry. Loeb argues that many activists eventually burn out due to the fact that they cannot move beyond their earlier identities. He notes, “Too many onetime activists have become prisoners of earlier identities, unable to see beyond them to the possibilities of a very different time.”¹⁵⁴ Marilyn’s transformation, facilitated by her involvement in community artistic endeavors and the friendships she sustained with poets through written correspondence, allowed her to remain committed to the struggle.

When we put the writing that Marilyn produced at FCI Dublin into context, her artistic reflections on her own identity transformation appear even more impressive. The oppressive space of the prison shapes how we approach the writings produced by imprisoned radical intellectuals. Dylan Rodriguez addresses the function of prison narratives in his article, “Social Truth and Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals,” noting that imprisoned radical intellectuals contribute to “a multilayered field of alternate vernaculars, including the construction of new languages of agency, politics, freedom, identity, and self-actualization.”¹⁵⁵ Rodriguez argues that imprisoned radical intellectuals’ declarations of political personhood represent a challenge to the state’s intent to remove them from the political domain. We should view imprisoned activists’ political struggles “over seemingly mundane issues (for example, access to health care or legal materials)”

¹⁵⁴ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2010, 259.

¹⁵⁵ Dylan Rodriguez, “‘Social Truth’ and Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals,” *Social Justice* 30, no. 2 (2003): 67, accessed October 12th, 2014, <http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/docview/60485046?accountid=7118>.

as “radical.”¹⁵⁶ One can imagine the difficulty that Marilyn faced in crafting these reflections considering the constant repression that she encountered.

BUILDING AN ACTIVIST COMMUNITY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE WALL

In addition to undergoing a change in her revolutionary outlook, Marilyn shifted her approach to activism during this period. Mariann explains, “When she got out to Dublin, all the trials were over, and the reality of this 80-year sentence began to sink into her. And that’s when she began to really look around...and say, this is my arena now for my activism.”¹⁵⁷ Marilyn became actively involved in HIV/AIDS peer group work and fundraising at FCI Dublin, activism that she continued from her earlier days at FCI Marianna. She organized an AIDS walkathon in the prison: women collected pledges from their supporters, receiving one dollar for every mile they walked in the exercise yard. They then donated the proceeds to an AIDS-related organization in the Bay Area.¹⁵⁸ In addition to her AIDS activism, Marilyn began teaching yoga, sitting meditation, and literacy classes.¹⁵⁹ Her comrade Laura Whitehorn, a white anti-imperialist activist who supported the Black Liberation Army, notes that many women would also approach Marilyn for informal counseling and advice. According to Whitehorn, “Women would always approach her for help in understanding not only incidents on the news and world affairs, but also incidents of racism and hostility among different nationalities in the

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

prison population.”¹⁶⁰ And finally, Marilyn played an active role in building support for other political prisoners such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, producing theoretical work on the role that the Left should play in opposing the death penalty.¹⁶¹

Along with her community-building work behind the wall, Marilyn managed to cultivate a vast network of supporters—many of whom paid her frequent visits—beyond the wall. According to Mariann, people from the Bay Area began visiting Marilyn as soon as they heard about her situation and activism. When they learned that Marilyn did not have family in the area, many of them began bringing their children, allowing her to adopt them as godchildren.¹⁶² Mariann explains:

And a lot of the people who visited her—they had children who became her godchildren. And who were brought to visit her... So people did the best that they could to give her everything you could have. Human contact, a family, love, and the unconditional love of children... so she did have a number of young ladies and young men who looked up to her all their lives.¹⁶³

Marilyn’s adoption of godchildren makes sense in the context of her ongoing laments about her inability to have children in the letters she exchanged with Mariann. In a letter from October 1985, Marilyn made the following comments:

Having children is one thing I am sad about. It just never happened even in the period when I was trying. I miss having relationships with children. They are the sunshine and the rain, no?¹⁶⁴

As more and more people grew to know Marilyn, she began inviting specific people to

¹⁶⁰ Suzie Day, “Cruel But Not Unusual: The Punishment of Women in U.S. Prisons,” *Monthly Review*, 53, no. 3 (2001): 42-55.

¹⁶¹ Resistance in Brooklyn, *Enemies of the State: An Interview with Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoners*, Montreal, Quebec: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002, 63.

¹⁶² Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 20 October 1985, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

come out and visit with her. Legal Services for Prisoners with Children (LSPC), a San Francisco-based organization, even “adopted” her, despite the fact that she didn’t have children. Mariann remembers that LSPC held regular fundraisers for Marilyn, in addition to visiting her frequently and providing ongoing support.¹⁶⁵

Out of all of the examples that I encountered, Mariann Wizard’s account of Marilyn’s talent to build relationships and support networks stood out to me the most. At the end of our longest interview, Mariann confessed a difficult truth that she realized shortly before Marilyn’s death:

If I had to look back over my life and say, who are my ten best friends, [Marilyn] is easily in that list. Who are the ten best people I’ve ever known? She’s easily in that list. But I wouldn’t be in hers. I wouldn’t be in hers. On either score. Either ten best friends or ten best people I’ve known [laughing]. I didn’t really realize that until fairly shortly before she died. And then when I did begin to realize that, there was like a day or two of like, ‘Well wow,’ you know? ...But then I just had to laugh. ...Isn’t that a wonderful, unique, and amazing accomplishment that she’s got? I mean, she’s got family. She’s got these godchildren. They love her. She loves them. She’s got those kind of relationships. And she’s done it just through the strength of will, the strength of her refusal to lay down and say, ‘Oh they’ve got me now. I quit.’¹⁶⁶

The idea that Marilyn’s friendship with Mariann didn’t even begin to scratch the surface of her support network sends a powerful message about her strength as a friend. The prison-industrial complex attempted to build a wall around Marilyn and remove her from her community, yet she managed to create more relationships than many of us on the outside have in a lifetime. Returning to the conversation surrounding activist burnout, it’s clear that Marilyn’s community played an integral role in fueling her commitment. On

¹⁶⁵ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

this topic, Loeb notes that in order to have lifelong commitment, “We need communities to sustain us. We need to find them, or create them, then labor continually to keep them vital and alive.”¹⁶⁷

RETURNING TO MARILYN AND MARIANN

Mariann is an extremely modest person, and despite her comments that she never made either of Marilyn’s “top ten lists,” she and Marilyn shared a unique bond that should not go unacknowledged. Near the end of her life, Marilyn increasingly thanked Mariann for her friendship and referred to Mariann as her “oldest friend.” Here is just one of many passages illustrating this trend that appears in the letters she sent to Mariann from FCI Dublin:

In my heart you were always one of the people who I believed would still be around. And so you are. Thank you. It has been somewhat sad to me that I have not heard from some people I sort of expected to still be, at least, a friend. I guess when the struggle heightens it exposes people’s willingness or fear to be associated.¹⁶⁸

Mariann explained to me that while others may have feared the possible repercussions of associating with Marilyn, she personally thought the whole thing was “bullshit.” “You knew her—so what? What are they going to do about that?”¹⁶⁹

Throughout Marilyn’s time at FCI Dublin, the two talked on the phone at least once per month, and Mariann said that she’d rarely leave one of Marilyn’s letters unanswered for more than a few days. Mariann paid several visits to FCI Dublin, and on

¹⁶⁷ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2010, 279.

¹⁶⁸ Marilyn Buck to Mariann Wizard, 11 September 1995, Mariann Wizard Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

¹⁶⁹ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

many occasions, she'd smuggle in items that Marilyn had requested. To provide just one example, Marilyn once asked her to smuggle in a tube of henna so that she could dye her hair.¹⁷⁰ Mariann explains that it was actually Bob Pardun's youngest daughter who gave her the idea for sneaking the henna past the guards:

I was in Portland visiting some friends before I went down [to Dublin]... actually it was Bob Pardun... and their youngest daughter helped me figure out how to get it in. ... Because, she said, 'I know how to do it! This is how they do it on TV. You stuff it right down the back of your jeans—right above the crack of your ass.' ... So I wrapped up this package of henna in a little piece of fabric, and stuffed it down my drawers, and then when I was out there chatting with [Marilyn] in the yard, I said, 'I've got your package.' And she said, 'Oh good. I'm on the cleanup crew here in the yard.' ... 'So, we're just going to go over here and stand by these bushes, and you'll just back up against those bushes, and then at some point, you just reach in and stick it over there.'¹⁷¹

Mariann not only smuggled items into prison for Marilyn, but she also sent her supplies legally through the mail. During the Brink's robbery, Marilyn accidentally shot herself in the leg while reaching for her gun, which resulted in her needing special orthopedic shoes. Mariann found a place in Austin that could make the shoes at a reasonable cost, so anytime Marilyn needed a new pair of shoes, Mariann would mail them to her. Mariann also organized a group of people who pitched in to buy Marilyn an annual subscription to the *New York Times*.¹⁷²

Marilyn's letters to Mariann also served an important function because she'd provide Mariann with support and advice during difficult times in her life. Mariann explains, "All of her letters... they were so warm. And very personal. She's going to ask

¹⁷⁰ Hair dye is banned in prison because prison officials claim that inmates could use it to alter their appearance during escape attempts.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

me how my son is. ...She's gonna console me about my horrible baby daddy and what a jerk he is."¹⁷³ Marilyn oftentimes infused her advice to Mariann with feminist suggestions and ideas as a means for comforting her. Mariann also told me about a moment when her son, a teenager, was wrongly arrested and charged with a crime that he did not commit. At the time, they lived in the state of Oregon, where the laws specify that children over the age of 15 who commit specific offenses are sent to adult prison. Mariann knew that a number of young people had committed suicide in adult prison, and she worried about her son. Needing to act quickly, she thought of Marilyn: "I asked myself what Marilyn would do. And I said, she would not let them take her son. She would not."¹⁷⁴ Mariann and her son fled the country until evidence exonerating him was finally revealed.

Marilyn and Mariann truly cared for one another, and both women found meaning and value in their friendship. Loeb makes a point about activist caretaking that on its face seems quite obvious, yet stories like Marilyn and Mariann's reveal its deep importance: "When activists take care of each other, they can surmount the most difficult personal situations."¹⁷⁵ Mariann and Marilyn supported each other through thick and thin, despite their differences in political ideologies and life choices. Their history serves as a powerful example of how friendship sustains activism.

After receiving word of her early release from prison in July 2010, Marilyn's supporters soon learned that she'd been diagnosed with a rare form of uterine cancer. Just

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Paul R. Loeb, *Soul of a Citizen: Living with Conviction in Challenging Times*, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2010, 280.

two weeks later, Marilyn passed away at the home of her lawyer and longtime friend, Soffiyah Elijah. Marilyn spent her last days visiting with young activists, thereby demonstrating her remarkable commitment to the struggle, her selflessness, and her talent for building relationships.¹⁷⁶ Marilyn's passing caused Mariann much sadness, and at several moments during our interview, I sensed a straining in Mariann's usually cheerful voice. Marilyn may be gone, yet she is certainly not forgotten. During my year of visits with Mariann Wizard, I got the sense that Mariann has decided to pay tribute to Marilyn's life by doing the thing that Marilyn would most likely suggest: passing down the legacy of lifelong activist struggle to the next generation.

¹⁷⁶ Mariann Wizard, Interview by Lauren N. Kramer, September 13, 2015.

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