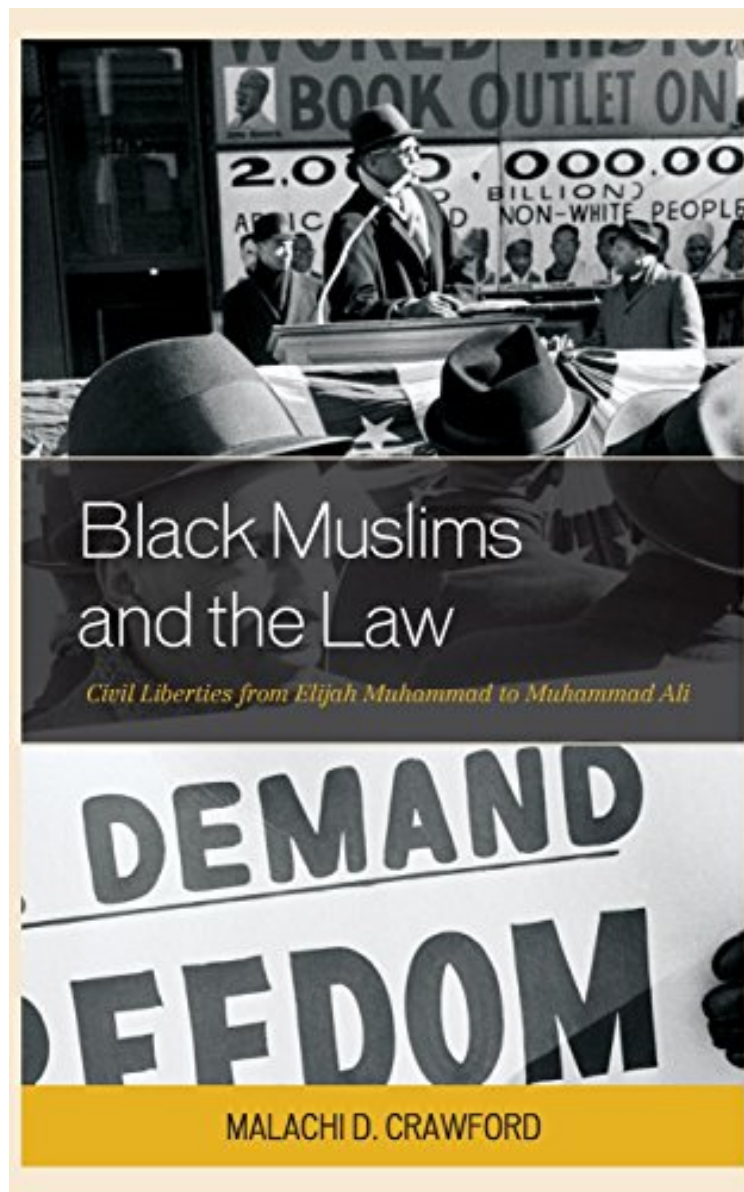


(Free) Black Muslims and the Law: Civil Liberties from Elijah Muhammad to Muhammad Ali (Critical Africana Studies)

Black Muslims and the Law: Civil Liberties from Elijah Muhammad to Muhammad Ali (Critical Africana Studies)

Malachi D. Crawford

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Malachi D. Crawford : Black Muslims and the Law: Civil Liberties from Elijah Muhammad to Muhammad Ali (Critical Africana Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Black Muslims and the Law: Civil Liberties from Elijah Muhammad to Muhammad Ali (Critical Africana

Studies):

Black Muslims and the Law: Civil Liberties From Elijah Muhammad to Muhammad Ali examines the Nation of Islam's quest for civil liberties as what might arguably be called the inaugural and first sustained challenge to the suppression of religious freedom in African American legal history. Borrowing insights from A. Leon Higginbotham Jr.'s classic works on American slavery jurisprudence, *Black Muslims and the Law* reveals the Nation of Islam's strategic efforts to engage governmental officials from a position of power, and suggests the federal executive, congressmen, judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials, prison administrators, state governments, and African American civic leaders held a common understanding of what it meant to be and not to be African American and religious in the period between World War II and the Vietnam War. The work raises basic questions about the rights of African descended people to define god, question white moral authority, and critique the moral legitimacy of American war efforts according to their own beliefs and standards.

Crawford carefully traces the legal stratagem of the Lost-Found Nation of Islam (NOI) regarding civil liberties and religious freedom to the early 1970s. Founded on July 4, 1930, NOI initially little emphasized civil rights or civil liberties. That changed following purported persecution at its Detroit temples, government raids, and arrests for draft evasion during WW II. NOI women at that point helped attain social legitimacy for NOI within the African American community. Influenced by Howard University School of Law Dean Charles Hamilton Houston's concern for civil rights and civil liberties, Howard Law alum Edward Jacko, along with the NOI's young minister, Malcolm X, drew attention to a police assault on NOI member Johnson Hinton in Harlem in 1957. By the early 1960s, incarcerated NOI members initiated lawsuits demanding the right to practice their religion. At the same time, NOI had to contend with mounting police raids. NOI employed its new newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, to present the organization as a legitimate religious entity. Muhammad Ali's legal struggles regarding conscientious objector status exemplified NOI's determination to safeguard its members' civil liberties. This is a concise, intelligent exploration of too-little-known facets of US cultural and legal history. **Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries. (CHOICE)**
Black Muslims and the Law is a strong contribution to the NOI's history, upending the narrative that has stressed the group's insularity and inveterate hostility to the civil rights movement. As Crawford effectively details, the NOI was not disengaged from the struggle for civil rights and civil liberties. It was, in fact, one of the most significant agents for their expansion—particularly in prisons. (*Journal of American History*)
Black Muslims and The Law is a seminal work that explores the Nation of Islam's legal battles for civil rights. Dr. Crawford has done an exceptional job documenting the Nation of Islam's role in moving America toward the promise of democracy for all those living within her borders. (Abul Pitre)
Fresh, focused, well researched, and engaging, Malachi Crawford's *Black Muslims and The Law* makes a significant contribution to African American social, religious, and legal history by offering a nuanced examination of the Nation of Islam's initially reluctant but ultimately effective use of the American legal system in the organization's extended quest for social legitimacy as a religious institution. Crawford's study not only deepens our understanding of the NOI's quest for social acceptability and justice, but also broadens our appreciation for the interrelated quests among African Americans for a full actualization of the rights and civil liberties guaranteed US citizens regardless of race or creed. (Karen Kossie-Chernyshev, Texas Southern University)
About the Author Malachi D. Crawford is assistant director and adjunct professor of African American studies at the University of Houston.