

Cleaver captured

Fifth Estate Collective

Florida state police arrested Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver yesterday as he sat smoking a cigarillo and reading the *Works of Chairman Mao* in the lobby of the Hotel Fontainebleu in Miami Beach. He is being held for extradition to California and has been charged with violating a statute which makes crossing state lines to save your life a federal offense.

However, California authorities are confused by reports that Cleaver has been arrested in 109 other communities and three foreign countries. Police in such widely flung cities as Boston, New York, Chicago, and Elk Falls, Idaho, are deluging the San Francisco police with telegrams maintaining that they have one, and in some cases, "two, three, many" Eldridge Cleavers under lock and key.

Perhaps the most baffling is the fact that San Francisco authorities themselves announced early yesterday that they had apprehended Cleaver as he sauntered into the Hall of Justice and asked a surprised officer where he could find the men's room.

San Francisco authorities later announced that they had been "mistaken" and that the man arrested had merely been wearing a "very convincing" rubber face mask made to look like Cleaver.

Since then the SFPD had arrested nine men for being Cleaver, seven "on suspicion of being Eldridge Cleaver," and one on a little-known ordinance against "impersonating a revolutionary hero."

All but four of those arrested have been released and charges against them dropped. Six have already filed suits of false arrest and are claiming a total of \$4, 250, 000 in damages from the City.

San Francisco police chief Thomas Cahill announced late yesterday afternoon that he had ordered an end to Cleaver's arrests.

"In the interest of fiscal responsibility," he explained, "I have issued standing orders not to arrest any Eldridge Cleavers for anything."

Early yesterday evening about 350 Eldridge Cleavers descended on San Francisco State College where they began occupying buildings. They brought with them 47 cartons of Cleaver masks to be given students and vowed to "Cleaverize" the college by dawn. Then they democratize the school and open it to "all the little Cleavers of San Francisco," a spokesman said, "regardless of race, creed or color."

In New York, the Stock Exchange was closed minutes after its opening yesterday when brokers panicked as Cleavers of all sizes, shapes, sexes, and modes of dress appeared on the floor of the exchange. In Washington Congress recessed for the day after Cleavers filled the galleries.

Early reports from Vietnam indicate that battalions of Cleavers, many of them in Viet Cong and North Vietnamese uniforms, have moved to occupy

U.S. installations throughout the country. Most American troops refuse to fire on "brother Eldridge," one Black serviceman explained.

More and more Cleavers are appearing in the American ranks, he said, "The officers are freaking out," he said. "Especially when the whole platoon goes 'oink, oink' at them after they give them an order."

In Paris, American negotiators left yesterday's session of the peace talks after finding that their opposite numbers were all Eldridge Cleaver; only to discover that he was also driving their limousines.

President-elect Nixon is reported to be having a custom-made Cleaver mask prepared for him "just in case." But rumors in the revolutionary underground are that by the inauguration "we will all be Che."

Interviewed wearing a Jerry Rubin mask on the TWA jetliner he had charmed out of its normal path into a run for East-of-the-Sun/West-of-the-Moon, the nation's Minister of Flight, Pundit Plato, told newsmen that it came as no surprise to him that increasing numbers of Americans are "dropping their masks and discovering themselves for what they are."

The emergence of thousands of Eldridge Cleavers should not astonish Americans, the Pundit said, since the American father is continually exhorting his son to "be a man," while American mother is constantly sending the boy outside to "get a little color in your cheeks."

Sidebar: text with photo of Eldridge Cleaver

Eldridge Cleaver Welcome Here

The international Committee to Defend Eldridge Cleaver has asked all underground, movement, and radical papers to print this poster of Brother Eldridge and ask their readers to hang it up in a conspicuous place to show support for him.

The Fifth Estate endorses this effort and we urge all of our readers to participate in saluting his escape from the mother country police forces. We wish him luck wherever he may be and he is welcome here.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

BLACK POWER TO BLACK PEOPLE!

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<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/69-december-26-1968-january-8-1969/cleaver-captured>
Fifth Estate #69, December 26, 1968-January 8, 1969

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