

**BOOK REVIEW**  
**By Journalist & Author, Thandisizwe Chimurenga**

*Black Power, Black Lawyer: My Audacious Quest for Justice* is the memoir of Nkechi Taifa, a Washington, DC-based human rights attorney.

Nkechi is what is known as a “movement attorney.” Movement attorneys are those legal warriors whose battlefield is the courtroom. They fight on behalf of activists and organizers, progressives, revolutionaries and regular folk who have been targeted by or ensnared in the criminal INjustice system. Chokwe Lumumba, Evelyn Williams, Haywood Burns, Lennox Hinds, Alton Maddox, Adjoa Aiyetoro, Thomas Ruffin, Nana Gyamfi, James Simmons, Rebecca Henry, Iris Bright Johnson, Jeffrey Edison, Joan Gibbs, Mawuli Davis, William Kunstler, Charles Garry, Robert Boyle and the People’s Law Office in Chicago are also examples of movement lawyers.

For most of her life, Nkechi has had her entire body and soul (not just her foot) firmly planted in two different worlds – the US legal/political system and the cultural and revolutionary Black nationalist community – that find themselves at antagonistic odds with one another. Despite the extreme odds Nkechi has been able to “make it work.”

She has been and continues to be a hard-working loyal and dedicated servant of the people and supporter of independent, self-determining Black institutions and organizations; and, she has either led or been a critical participant in some of the most far-reaching criminal justice reform efforts within the United States over the past 30 years.

Reading her memoir was enjoyable beyond measure. Not only did I get an eyewitness view of history and the stories behind the stories, I was also taken on a wonderful trip down memory lane.

I landed in D.C. a native transfer student to Howard University. I soon learned what most all college students learn: your real education takes place outside of the classroom.

I was transported back to the “Chocolate City” where my political consciousness was nurtured and grew by leaps and bounds. I read about people and places I had (mostly) fond memories of, and experiences I appreciated because they contributed greatly to the development of the woman I am today.

For several years now, I have been a staunch advocate of Black women telling their stories. We all have them, whether we believe it or not, and it is crucial that we get those stories out of us and into the world. Ida B. Wells knew it. That’s why she sat down and wrote her autobiography. Toni Morrison knew it. That’s why she published the autobiography of a 30-year-old, former political prisoner Angela Davis. It’s why Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors penned her memoir in her early thirties.

Black womens’ stories are important. I’m so grateful that Nkechi has now told hers.

Asante Sana!  
Free the Land!  
Pamoja Tutashinda Mbilishaka!

Thandisizwe Chimurenga  
Journalist, Author