

Freedom Vigil for the Angola 3 - Herman Wallace

Written by Robert ID2858

Monday, 17 July 2006 15:58 -

A Freedom Vigil for the Angola 3 - Supporters to hold vigil for Herman Wallace's hearing Friday, August 15th 2006 at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The state court in Baton Rouge has scheduled an evidentiary hearing for the former Black Panther Herman Wallace August 15-17.

Some history on the Angola 3:

Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace have spent the past 34 years in solitary confinement at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. They are serving sentences of life without parole as a result of wrongful convictions for the 1972 murder of a prison guard. Robert Wilkerson, the third member of the Angola 3, proved his innocence and was released in 2001, after spending 29 years in solitary confinement.

- Woodfox and Wallace were activist prisoners who risked their lives by standing up against racism, prison rape, and violence at Angola, Louisiana's slave plantation-turned-prison farm. In 1972, the prison was racially segregated (80 percent of the prisoners were – and still are – African-American), had an all-white staff, and was known for terrible brutality. Between 1972 and 1975, 40 Angola prisoners were stabbed to death and 350 more were seriously injured in an epidemic of violence.
- Woodfox and Wallace, along with many other prisoners, responded to these conditions by organizing themselves, establishing political education programs among prisoners, and organizing civil disobedience such as work stoppages and dining hall strikes. Woodfox and Wallace founded a chapter of the Black Panther Party inside the prison.
- When a prison guard was found stabbed to death in 1972, Woodfox and Wallace were immediately placed in solitary confinement and charged with the murder. The prison administration unleashed a reign of terror on the black prisoner population, including beatings, the forced shaving of Afro haircuts, and mass solitary confinement.
- The state prosecuted Woodfox and Wallace by using the testimony of prison snitches, a notoriously unreliable form of evidence. At their separate trials, different snitches – telling different stories – testified against the two men. Since the trials, new evidence has emerged that

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these witnesses were coerced or bribed with pardons, early releases, and free cigarette rations.

- Three of the state's witnesses have now admitted that they lied under oath and have recanted their testimony against Woodfox and Wallace. Others have come forward to identify the prisoner – now dead – who actually committed the murder. The courts in Louisiana have yet to rule on this evidence.
- While they wait for the courts to grant them the justice for which they have waited 34 years, Woodfox and Wallace continue to spend at least 23 hours of every day alone in 6-by-9 foot cells. The un-air-conditioned concrete block cells are excruciatingly hot during the summer months. The ACLU has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit alleging that these conditions are cruel and unusual punishment.
- Wallace has been wrongfully held in isolation for 34 years because of his involvement with the Black Panther Party at Angola Penitentiary. The Louisiana Court of Appeals ordered the evidentiary hearing into Wallace's claim that the state failed to disclose to him that prison officials paid the chief prosecution witness at his 1974 trial with cartons of cigarettes and a pardon of his life sentence for testifying against Wallace.

COME TO ANGOLA LOUISIANA!

Political prisoner/POW supporters, prison abolitionist, and comrades from all over, this is a call to organize in your community to bring people to Angola prison in August for former Black Panther Herman Wallace's hearing. Load up your buses, vans, trains and bikes to get people here for this historic event.

This vigil is appropriate and sends a powerful statement to those who hold power on the other side of the prison walls. They cannot bury our comrades, friends, families and citizens behind concrete and barbed wire. The Louisiana State Penitentiary and Burl Cain do NOT want the exposure to their prisons. Herman's case, just as Robert Wilkerson's did, exposes the depths the state will go to hide the truth.

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The A3 are asking for people to come and stand in solidarity during Herman's hearing.

The BBC in a recent investigative news program broadcast for 25 million viewers said about the Angola 3 case: "...there is powerful evidence that they were framed..." and "...despite the compelling evidence of a terrible miscarriage of justice, Woodfox and Wallace remain locked up...."

Come and Join us deep in Louisiana on the Angola prison site which was built from old slave plantations. Remember, as many prisoners have said it's 'the same game, different name...' prisons ARE modern day versions of slave plantations for many.

Common Ground Relief and other community groups will be sending buses from New Orleans.

Buses and vans will be leaving from many points in the U.S. including: Austin, Lawrence, Oakland,

New York City, Chicago, Tucson, Houston, Dallas, Philadelphia and more.

EVENT INFO:

DATE: Friday, August 15th 2006

LOCATION* Louisiana State Penitentiary

*Location may change due to a request for change of venue to Baton Rouge. Please make contact to reaffirm the location and time of vigil.

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At the moment, the hearing is scheduled to be held inside Angola prison. It is not yet known how many members of the public will be allowed inside or what the procedures will be for gaining admission.

The vigil is being held to:

- Support Herman Wallace and show the prison officials and the courts that the public demands justice for the A3, and all political prisoners.
- Expose the racism and corruption that goes on behind the walls of the Louisiana State Penitentiary.
- Demand that the governor and legislators of Louisiana form an investigation and audit of Louisiana State Penitentiary.

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We hope to see you there!!

Free the Angola 3.

Free ALL political prisoners.

WHAT IS THE EVIDENTIARY HEARING ABOUT?

Message from Scott Fleming their longtime lawyer about the hearing:

The state court in Baton Rouge has scheduled an evidentiary hearing for former Black Panther Herman Wallace August 15-17 (though it may not take three days).

The court will consider the well-established evidence that Hezekiah Brown, the only purported

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eyewitness to the murder Wallace was convicted of, was provided a pardon, a transfer to minimum security, and a carton-per-week cigarette ration in exchange for his false testimony.

If the court finds that Brown received these favors, that they were not disclosed to the defense or the jury, and that the state's suppression of them could have contributed to Wallace's conviction, then Wallace's conviction will be overturned. Given the overwhelming evidence that Wallace and his co-defendant, Albert Woodfox, are innocent, supporters are optimistic of a positive outcome.

CIVIL CASE

In addition, the Angola 3 civil rights suit, which alleges that their 34+ years as well as Robert King Wilkerson's 29 years in solitary confinement is a violation of the right to due process and amounts to cruel and unusual punishment. The suit, which the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled has merit to proceed, is moving forward in federal court and could go to trial in the fall of this year.

FREEDOM VIGIL FOR THE ANGOLA 3

Supporters to hold vigil for Herman Wallace's hearing.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.3BlackPanthers.com>

<http://www.Angola3.org>