

*Ex-Black Panther Albert  
Woodfox, held nearly 44 years in  
solitary confinement, dies of  
COVID-19*

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New Orleans, August 5 (RHC)-- Albert Woodfox, who was held in solitary confinement longer than any prisoner in U.S. history, has died at the age of 75 from COVID. The former Black Panther and political prisoner won his freedom six years ago after surviving nearly 44 years in solitary confinement.

Born in 1947 in New Orleans, Woodfox died there from complications from the coronavirus, his family said in a statement. "With heavy hearts we write to share that our partner, brother, father, grandfather, and friend, Albert Woodfox, passed away this afternoon from complications caused by COVID-19," his family said.

“Whatever you called him — Fox, Shaka, Cinque or any of his other endearing nicknames — please know that your care and compassion sustained Albert through his remarkable 75 years, and we are eternally grateful for that.”

The oldest of six siblings grew from a “leader ... into liberator,” they added, inspiring the United States to “think more deeply about mass incarceration, prison abuse, and racial injustice.”

Woodfox had been part of the “Angola 3” — a group of male inmates, including Robert King and Herman Wallace, known for their long stretches in solitary confinement at the notorious maximum-security Louisiana State Penitentiary — a former plantation using enslaved people that was turned into a prison known as Angola.

The men said they believed they were targeted for institutional cruelty because of their political beliefs after they set up a prison chapter of the Black Panther Party at Angola in 1971.

Woodfox spent 43 years and 10 months in solitary confinement and is thought to have served more time in solitary confinement than any other prisoner in U.S. history, according to his attorneys. He told The Washington Post in an interview in 2020 it had been “a horrible experience.” He said his mother and his association with the Black Panther group gave him “internal strength to endure” and a “purpose” and “self-worth” to get through the unending isolation.

In jail, along with King, Wallace and others, he would study history and law, teach other inmates how to read and write and play games made up in cells. They also organized strikes and protests about prison conditions, racial injustice, sexual abuse in jail, work hours and clothing, he said. “We dared to resist,” he said. And added: “We were very influential.”

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