

Statement by Albert Woodfox from Angola Prison – 11/03/2008

A response to slanderous statements made to the media by the Louisiana Attorney General, Bobby Caldwell – adapted from transcripts of a phone call.

When I woke up this morning, it was like any other morning, nothing unusual. However, later this morning, Herman Wallace told me he had been informed that there was an article about me in the Advocate newspaper (Baton Rouge) – the Saturday edition. Since the Saturday and Sunday papers are not delivered to Camp D on the weekend, I called a friend to ask them if they knew anything about this article. I soon found out that because of a motion pending before the Honorable Judge James Brady, Middle District Court, regarding my being released on bail; the State of Louisiana, through the Attorney General's Office, decided to use a smear campaign reminiscent of the Federal Government's Cointelpro program to oppose my constitutional rights to be released on bail.

For those of you who may not know or have forgotten, Cointelpro, Counter Intelligence program was a Federal Government Intelligence Act aimed at the American people and carried out by the FBI. The purpose of Cointelpro was to destroy or neutralize any political party, organization or group of individuals that the United States government felt had challenged their policies, both domestic and foreign. The techniques and tactics used were lies, deceptions, misinformation and character assassination. These techniques and tactics were used to cause chaos and disunity among members of these organizations. If the United States government decided that any political party, organization or group was a threat to its agenda, they became targets of Cointelpro. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense became a primary target of Cointelpro attacks. Although Cointelpro was exposed to the American People in the 70's, it is my opinion that the techniques and tactics used by them are still being used against American citizens. It has become increasingly clear to me that the State of Louisiana, through the Attorney General's Office has decided to use these tactics and techniques to oppose bail being granted.

On Oct. 14th, 2008, my attorneys argued a motion for bail before the Honorable Judge James Brady of the Middle District Court. Shortly after that hearing, a smear campaign was started. During the hearing, my niece testified in court that she and her family, after a long discussion, decided to allow me to live with her and her family, supervising any conditions the court would impose of bail was granted. Someone contacted the homeowners' association that my niece and family belong to and told its members that my niece had decided to bring into their community a murderer and a dangerous man. They all made sure that the news media knew of the discord that was pitting neighbors against neighbors. I have been held in Louisiana State Penitentiary for almost 40 years. Since being here, I have always fought against inhumane and cruel conditions. As a member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, I along with Herman Wallace thought that we had an obligation to speak out and organize against brutality, racism and inhumane conditions and the rape of young men that was being used by security to run and

control this prison. As a result of our actions, we earned the hatred of both prisoner and security.

Our belief in the right of every human being to be treated humanely, no matter their color or ethnic background, would not allow us to stop our acts no matter what. Our reward was to be framed for the murder of a prison guard that took place in 1972 and locked in a cell for 23 hours a day for 33 and 36 years respectively, and almost 40 years in this prison. In spite of the inhumane and brutal conditions, I, we, have continued to live by the principals and philosophy of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. We met any criteria that exist that make us model prisoners. Yet we are continuously referred to as militant and dangerous. The latest Cointelpro smear campaign against me by the State Attorney General's office is to have placed in the local newspaper the threat of prosecuting me for robberies and rapes that occurred in the 1960's around the time I was arrested for the armed robbery charge that I have served 25 plus years for. I deny now as I did then, when questioned about these crimes, any involvement. The Orleans Parish Police Department, despite no evidence connecting me to these crimes, decided to do what was common practice against African American men in those times. Use my arrest for a similar crime to clear the books by charging me with every robbery and rape that took place during that time. Other than the filing of the charges against me, there have never been any legal actions taken by the District Attorney's Office of Orleans Parish. I have never been prosecuted at any level or in any form of these charges simply because I am innocent. The District Attorney's Office of Orleans Parish has known of my whereabouts for the last 38 years and has not made any attempt to prosecute me.

This is the second time that Herman Wallace and I have been victims of the Cointelpro attacks. In the 1970's, our first support group was infiltrated by a government agent whose responsibility was to disrupt raising funds by Party members so that we could not afford competent legal counsel. In closing, this is the second time that I have been a victim of Cointelpro. Instead of choosing to fight the case in the Court of Law, the State of Louisiana through the Attorney General's Office has decided to fight this case using the smear campaign of Cointelpro, using lies, deception, misinformation and character assassination. The Attorney General's Office hopes to avoid trying this case in the Court of Law, but rather in the media and court of public opinion.

**I will leave my lawyers to handle this latest persecution by the State of Louisiana in a Court of Law. This murder conviction has been reversed twice already because the Sate of Louisiana has shown total disregard for the United States Constitution and the Laws of the State. By using Cointelpro attacks, the State of Louisiana Attorney General's Office has put into jeopardy the lives of my niece and her family as well as their careers. Let us let the evidence speak for itself.
All Power to the People, Albert "Shaka" Woodfox, Angola 3**

Addendum: As I stated, I have never been prosecuted at any level for any of these charges that I was once questioned about by the Orleans Parish Police. As a matter of fact, when I first found out about these charges, I asked my State appointed attorney what was going on. He told me he would go talk to someone, to check on the charges and come and let me know. About ½ hour later, he came back to me and said there are no more charges and the State had determined there is no evidence or any witnesses connecting you to those crimes so therefore, you would not be prosecuted for them. That was the last time I ever heard of these charges until the Attorney General's Office used the threat of these charges to smear me and my reputation to influence whether or not Judge Brady would grant bail. There is no evidence and I never was involved with these crimes and I defy him if he has evidence then bring it forth.

It was common practice in the 60's, if there was a series of burglaries going on in the neighborhood and you got arrested for burglary, they would give you ten to fifteen burglaries. Their concern was clearing the books. This way it looked good, they could go to the public and say that they solved these 15 burglaries. Once they turned it over to the District Attorney's Office, they weren't concerned whether the cases were prosecuted. Now the District Attorney's Office in most cases would use all these burglaries to pressure you. They knew you were innocent, but they would use all these charges to pressure that person to plead guilty to the burglary he was originally arrested for. That is just how the system works and I am more than sure that it is still going on now.

The specter of these old charges is because they don't want people talking about what is really going on with this case. The Attorney General made the statement that two juries had spoken and I was convicted twice on this charge (the murder of prison guard Brent Miller). What he failed to say is that, had the State of Louisiana followed the United States Constitution, this case would not have been overturned twice. They were able to convict me because they used unconstitutional tactics and they made sure that I had incompetent lawyers who would not present a strong defense. We are talking about payment being made to the principal witness in this case. Hezekiah Brown was the only person who ever said that he saw us involved in the death of Brent Miller. We found out that it was paid testimony and that my attorney in my second trial should have objected to this being used. Judge Brady has overturned my conviction and the state is appealing that decision.

If you want to smear an African-American man's reputation, all you have to do is say the word rape. How do you un-ring this bell. These people are trying to assassinate my character. All of the people, all over this country and all over the planet who have rallied to the cause to free the Angola 3, what can I say to these people to change what the Attorney General has said with absolutely no proof or evidence of any kind. How do I un-ring this bell. That is why I felt it was so important to get out this statement. Anyone who supports the cause for the freedom of Herman Wallace and myself, hear me say that I did not do this, I have no knowledge of it.

We were targeted because we were members of the Black Panther Party and we all know how far the government of the United States went to destroy the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and the good work they were doing. Had Herman and I not been successful in organizing and bringing down the barriers between white and black inmates in this prison at the time, and fighting rape, stopping the practice of forcing young men into a life of sexual slavery in the prison, had we not challenged the very core controlling mechanism of this prison, I don't think we would have been singled out.