

New Orleans - April 17th & 18th

Sunday and Monday were busy days for the Angola 3 Committee. I started the morning early and went down to the Rae Building where all the activities were going to be centered. I put up the photo exhibit, then I followed Brackin and Kevin to Super Sunday over in Algiers which is a Black Indian celebration. I had the time of my life, but after a few hours I returned to the Rae building.

I must say the A3 committee did an outstanding job organizing events. They got a billboard put up across the street from the Rae building. They had articles placed in the local newspapers. Herbert Parnell (Poetic Panther) and I went on WWOZ radio to talk about the events. There were a number of panels and Herb Parnell was the MC and did a very good job keeping the event flowing. Sunday, Geronimo came out to show support for the A3. He even spoke. It was good seeing G as I haven't seen him in a few years,

On the corner of the block is the bar "Sidney's" which is owned by Kermit Ruffins, one of the stars of the HBO show "Treme". We spent some time in his bar with him and he supported the A3 by sitting in the cell Jackie built for an hour. Volunteers sat in the cell for 39 hours to commemorate the 39 years of solitary for Herman and Albert. Sunday was Super Sunday and they had a parade come right down St. Bernard street around 5pm. The parade brought hundreds of people passed the Rae building and the billboard. Many people stopped to check out what we were doing or to say, "I read about this in today's paper and I'll be back".

On Monday there were also panels, Robert King did a book signing and the documentary "In the Land of the Free" was shown again to a full house. The day ended with music with the Mario Abney Quarter featuring Dione "Diva" Character, Truth Universal and Michal Ward.

I want to say to the A3 Committee, Parnell, Jackie, Brackin, Mwalimu, Tory, Maria, and everyone else - Job well done. BPP alumni members need to read about and support the Angola 3, remember they're Panthers and Political Prisoners.

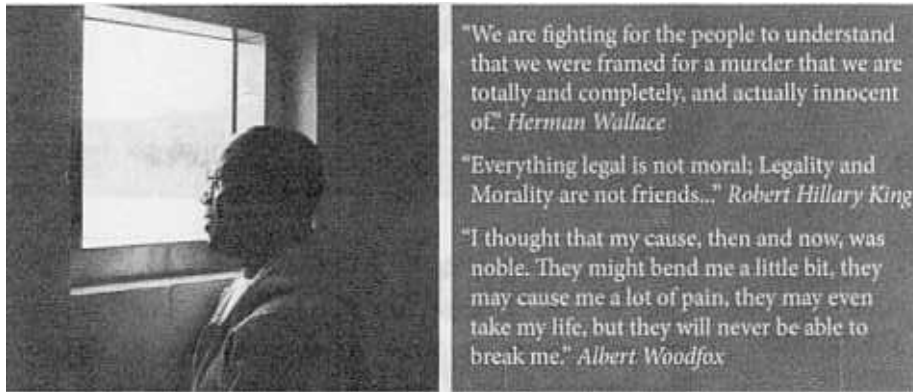
Billy X

CONFINED AND ISOLATED 23 HOURS PER DAY IN 6'X 9' CELLS

EVENT SCHEDULE:

April 18th, 2011 marks the 39th year that Herman and Albert have been held in conditions that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights considers **torture**. The New Orleans Coalition to Free the Angola 3 will host a 39 hour vigil in commemoration. 39 people will spend an hour each in a replica 6x9 ft cell. Synchronized to begin at the hour prison guard Brent Miller was pronounced dead on April 17th 1972 (7:30 am), the vigil will finish 39 hours later with the only free member of The Angola 3, Robert King Wilkerson, walking out of the cell at 10:30pm, April 18th.

Additional events include screening of Vadim Jean's *In The Land of the Free* & Liz Garbus' *The Farm*, arts and crafts by inmates at Angola, teach-ins, panels, yoga & meditation and excerpts from Parnell Herbert's play *Angola 3*. Pieces from the internationally renown art exhibit *The House That Herman Built* by Jackie Sumell and Herman Wallace will be on display. Robert King Wilkerson will be available to sign his book *From the Bottom of the Heap*. A candlelight vigil will take place at 7pm, Sunday led by guest speakers and religious leaders. Both nights will close with an hour of music hosted by Dionne "Diva" Character.



Herman Wallace, Elayn Hunt Correctional Center, Louisiana, 2011

Herman Wallace, Albert Woodfox and Robert King have collectively spent over 107 years in solitary confinement. Together they are known as the Angola 3. In 1972 their organizing efforts successfully abated inmate rape, sexual slavery, brutality, murder, racial discrimination and segregation within Angola Prison.

In retaliation the prison administration framed, charged and convicted Herman and Albert for the murder of a prison guard. There was no evidence linking them to the crime - their convictions were based on the testimony of paid prison snitches. Both men were placed in solitary confinement where they remain

to this day. Robert King was framed for the murder of another inmate and was released in 2001 after 29 years of solitary confinement. He has spent the last decade advocating on behalf of Herman and Albert and political prisoners worldwide.

Sunday 17th April

- 7:30am Doors open
- 10:30am "The Farm 2" Angola Prison documentary screening
- 12pm DVD screening of Angol 3 'the play'
- 2:00pm Former Inmate Conversations
- 2:30pm PRESS CONFERENCE
- 3:00pm Robert King Book Signing: "From the Bottom of the Heap"
- 3:45pm "The Farm" Angola Prison documentary screening
- 5:15pm Panel: *Criminal Injustice System*
- 6:15pm Former Inmate Conversations
- 7:00pm Candlelight Vigil followed by excerpts from *Angola 3*, the play and art exhibit *The House That Herman Built*
- 8:00pm Panel: *Art as a Revolutionary Tool*
- 9:30pm An hour of music with Damion Neville & Truth Universal

Monday 18th April

- 7:30am Doors open
- 9:00am Community Yoga & Meditation
- 11:30am Former Inmate Conversations
- 2:30pm Discussion: Economics, Education & Our Rights
- 4:00pm Robert King Book Signing: "From the Bottom of the Heap"
- 5:30pm Panel: Tracie Washington, Oliver Thomas & Nick Trenticosta
- 6:30pm Angola 3 Documentary "In the Land of the Free"
- 8:00pm Angola 3 Panel featuring Robert King, Mwalimu Johnson and others
- 9:30pm An hour of music with Mario Abney Quartet featuring Dionne "Diva" Character, Truth universal and Michael Ward
- 10:00pm Closing Ceremony



CHRIS GRANGER / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

Robert King Wilkerson, who spent 29 years in solitary confinement at Angola before he was set free 10 years ago, stands in a prototype of his 6-by-9-by-12 cell built by artist Jackie Sumell. The other two of the Angola 3 are still in solitary confinement.

Cell-replica vigil to pay tribute to Angola duo

*39 will mark
39th year in solitary*

By **Katy Reckdahl**
Staff writer

For 39 hours, starting this morning, 39 New Orleanians, including notables such as trumpeter Kermit Ruffins and former Entergy New Orleans CEO Dan Packer, will each spend an hour alone inside a re-created prison cell in the 7th Ward to pay tribute to Herman Wallace and

Albert Woodfox, two of the so-called Angola 3.

Built behind the large plate-glass window of the RAE House at 1212 St. Bernard Ave., the cell replica is a 6-foot by 9-foot box made of wood.

An average-sized man with outstretched arms can touch both walls, said Norris Henderson, who founded Voice of the Ex-offender after his release from Angola in 2003. "When guys who had been inside (prison) lived in FEMA trailers, they thought they were spacious," he said.

Last week, as artist Jackie

See **ANGOLA**, B-2



CHRIS GRANGER / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

In a window at 1212 St. Bernard Ave. hangs a wooden silhouette of a prisoner reacting to his freedom after years of confinement. For 39 hours starting this morning, people will take turns sitting in a re-created prison cell inside the building, calling attention to the plight of two who many believe are wrongly incarcerated.

Documentary to be shown Monday

ANGOLA from B-1

Sumell built the cell behind the storefront window, it became clear that New Orleans has an intimate connection to Angola, through the thousands of local men who have been sent there over the years. The vast maximum-security facility holds more than 5,100 prisoners and is the centerpiece of the penal system in Louisiana, which incarcerates a higher proportion of its residents than any other state.

"There's a very strong relationship throughout the city with the penitentiary. Most people I know have a relationship with Angola," said Parnell Herbert, community organizer for the Coalition to Free the Angola 3. This week, he said, people who spotted the cell through the window dropped in to talk about their experience at Angola.

The wooden cell triggered memories, some said: Of washing clothes in Angola's toilets, as is the custom. Of working in fields for pennies an hour. Of waits for weekend visiting hours, hoping a loved one would get a ride from New Orleans. Of prisoners unable to visit dying parents.

Henderson, who worked in the prison library while incarcerated,

confinement of the two men as "durations so far beyond the pale that this court has not found anything even remotely comparable in the annals of American jurisprudence."

Inside the cell replica are a prison toilet, sink and three shelves, suspended from the wall. The big shelf serves as a bunk when topped with a thin plastic mattress; the two smaller ones are writing tables.

Former death-row inmate John Thompson founded the RAE House to help former prisoners who, like him, were exonerated of crimes and released.

"The cell represents my former life," Thompson said. "It represents the exonerated. That cell represents just how cruel the system is."

Lasting psychological impact

In real life, prisoners are also allowed two boxes of books, papers and personal possessions, typically stowed under the bunk. And in the real Angola, thick concrete and iron bars replace the fresh-cut wood Sumell used.

"That cell may look peaceful," King said. "But you're encaged in prison. You're confined."

When he was young, he walked all around New Orleans, King said. But after years of being

DATA FILE

delivered books to the Angola 3: Wallace, Woodfox and Robert King Wilkerson, who was released in 2001 and now goes by the name Robert King.

Wilkerson was set free after his conviction in the 1973 murder of a fellow inmate was vacated. But unless the courts intervene, Wallace, 69, and Woodfox, 64, could be in Angola for the remainder of their lives for the 1972 stabbing death of prison guard Brent Miller, which Miller's widow and a growing coalition insist the two didn't commit.

Prison officials say the trio encouraged violence against guards; supporters say Wallace and Woodfox, co-founders of Angola's chapter of the Black Panther Party, were targeted for what Warden Burl Cain refers to as their "Black Pantherism."

Documentary of a nightmare

Sunday will mark the 39th anniversary of Miller's death — hence the 39-hour vigil — and Teenie Verret, Miller's widow, said she would like to know who killed her husband, leaving her a widow at 17.

"If they (Woodfox and Wallace) did not do it — and I believe they didn't — they have been living a nightmare," Verret says in "In the Land of the Free," a new documentary film about the case, narrated by actor Samuel L. Jackson. The film will be shown during the vigil in an adjoining room that will be a rotating stage for music, Mardi Gras Indians, discussions, theater and yoga.

In the solitary-confinement area where Wallace and Woodfox have spent almost all of the past 39 years, men are confined at least 23 hours a day inside their cells, Henderson said, describing how prisoners stick their legs but of the bars so that they have enough space to do sit-ups.

Groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty International have called for prolonged solitary confinement to be banned. It's believed that Wallace and Woodfox have been held in solitary longer than anyone else in the United States. In a 2006 report, U.S. Magistrate Judge Docia Dalby described the nearly four decades of solitary

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'If they (Woodfox and Wallace) did not do it — and I believe they didn't — they have been living a nightmare.'

TEENIE VERRET
in "In the Land of the Free"

held in a cramped cell, he finds it hard to adapt to large, open spaces. "Even now. And I've been out 10 years," he said.

Being alone in a locked cell can give a prisoner the impression that he'll never

leave. "That in itself is torture," King said.

Woodfox grew up in Tremé, a stone's throw from St. Bernard Avenue, and some older neighbors know his family, which remains in the area, or remember him from Joseph A. Craig Elementary School. Herbert, who grew up in the nearby Lafitte public-housing complex, said he and Woodfox landed their first jobs at Brennan's Restaurant, washing dishes.

Wallace, too, is still remembered in town. This week, Mwalimu Johnson reminisced about him as he peeked in on Sumell's progress on the cell, which she created from measurements and drawings sent to her by Wallace. Johnson grew up Uptown, next door to Wallace, who walked pigeon-toed, giving him the lifelong nickname, "Hooks."

Along with Ruffins and Packer, those who will spend an hour in the cell include Metro Disposal owner Jimmie Woods; retired New Orleans police community liaison Roland Doucette; Glenn Amedee, who owns the Wisdom reception center and the Perfect Fit nightclub; Paul Sylvester, who owns Sweet Lorraine's Jazz Club; musician Damion Neville; students from Tulane University and Eleanor McMain Secondary School; and a long list of activists and lawyers.

Ostensibly, the vigil is about getting attention for righting past injustices. But it's also about human kindness, King said. "It symbolizes empathy for Herman and Albert. And for what we could call the Angola 5,000," he said.

The vigil begins at 7:30 a.m. today and ends Monday at 10:30 p.m. A complete schedule of events is available at Angola3Action.org.

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JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED

THEN:



NOW:



Over a decade ago Herman, Albert and Robert filed a civil lawsuit challenging the inhumane and increasingly pervasive practice of long-term solitary confinement. Magistrate Judge Dalby describes their almost four decades of solitary as “durations so far beyond the pale” she could not find “anything even remotely comparable in the annals of American jurisprudence.” The case, expected to go to trial in 2011, will detail unconstitutionally cruel and unusual treatment and systematic due process violations at the hands of Louisiana officials.

We believe that only by openly examining the failures and inequities of the criminal justice system in America can we restore integrity to that system.

We must not wait. We can make a difference:

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST AND/OR SIGN A PETITION TO GOVERNOR JINDAL AND ERIC HOLDER

WWW.ANGOLA3.ORG (FIRST PAGE)

HOST YOUR OWN SCREENING OF ANGOLA 3 DOCUMENTARY “IN THE LAND OF THE FREE”

EMAIL ODSLC@GMAIL.COM TO SIGN UP

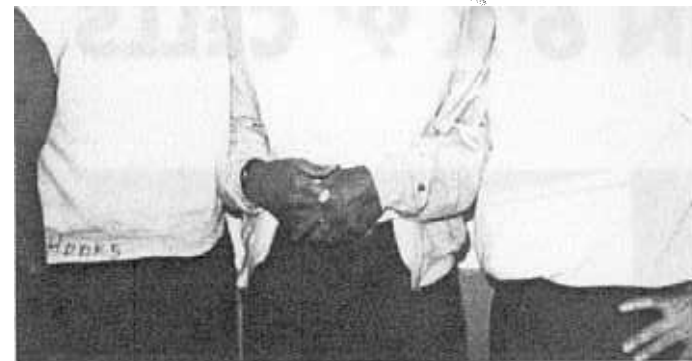
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Left to right: Herman Wallace, Robert King and Albert Woodfox, Angola Prison, 2001



New Orleans
Coalition to Free
The Angola 3
presents

39 HOURS TO COMMEMORATE 39 YEARS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

39 YEARS OF INNOCENCE



Angola 3 / Herman Wallace

For more info on
Angola 3 & related
projects:

www.angola3.org

www.angola3action.org

www.angola3thelav.com

www.hermanshouse.org

www.inthelandofthefreefilm.com

www.r-a-e.org

7:30 am April 17th
– 10:30pm April 18th
2011

The RAE Building,
1212 St. Bernard Ave,
New Orleans

**FREE THE
ANGOLA 3**