

Who is Russell Maroon Shoatz?

My name is Russell (Maroon) Shoatz and I am a New African Political Prisoner of War, who at this moment is serving a prison sentence at a Pennsylvania state institution. I was originally locked up in January of 1972, and have since spent over 33 years in 15 different state, county, and federal prisons, jails, and a maximum security prison/mental institutions. Over 17 of these years were spent in the "holes" of these various facilities locked down for 23 or more hours daily.

I was born in Philadelphia in August of 1943, one of 12 children in the household of Gladys & Russell Shoats. I attended school there until the age of 15, after which I was in and out of reform schools and youth institutions until the age of 18, mainly due to gang related activities. These gang activities, though not drug related as the bulk of similar activities are today, still had the same root causes of lack of comprehensive youth oriented programs in the schools and neighborhoods, coupled with high unemployment and police repression in the New African communities.

I was married twice and became the father of 7 children between the years of 1964 and 1970. During the early to middle 1960's, I became increasingly politically aware and active in the New African liberation movement. I was a founding member of The Black Unity Council, a Philadelphia grouping that eventually merged with the

Philadelphia Chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1969.

In August of 1970, at the height of the nationwide repression of the New African liberation movement, 4 others and I became fugitives (known as the "Philly 5") after a Philadelphia policeman was killed and another was



wounded in a retaliatory attack on a Philadelphia police station. In response to the heightened repression of the New African liberation movement in general, and the unjustified killing of a New African youth by the repressive police in that local community, from August of 1970 until January of 1972, the date of my capture and arrest, I was active on the armed front of the New African Liberation Army. All of my actions and activities during this period were in direct response to, and in direct support of the movement's activities. I was tried and convicted for the attack on the police station and Sentenced to Life-Plus Imprisonment.

In September of 1977, myself and three other New African Political Prisoners of War liberated ourselves from the state prison at Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. Two of these brothers

were recaptured and a third was killed during the escape. However, I remained at large for a month, in the teeth of a massive "slave style" hunt by local, state and federal forces, who had also recruited large numbers of the local rural white populace to help in their search.

From my capture in October of 1977, until November of 1989, I was kept in various "holes" in numerous state, county, and federal prisons, and a maximum-security prison/mental institution. During this period I was locked down daily at the state prisons at Huntingdon, Pittsburgh, Camp Hill, Dallas, Rockview, and Graterford, Pennsylvania, as well as the Allegheny, Wayne, Washington, Lackawanna, Montgomery, and Philadelphia county prisons and the US penitentiaries at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and Leavenworth, Kansas.

In 1979, I was forcibly transferred to the maximum-security prison/mental institution at Waymart, Pennsylvania known as "Fairview." During my over one year stay at this facility, I was forcibly drugged and on one occasion was hospitalized from a hospital-induced overdose of these drugs.

In March of 1980, myself and another New African Political Prisoner of War were able to liberate ourselves from this institution after a female New African activist smuggled a revolver and sub-machine gun into the institution for our use. Three days later all three of us were captured after a gun battle with local, state and county police, and F.B.I. agents.

In the wake of the historic Camp Hill rebellion, during October of 1989, at the state prison at Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, I was transferred from the state prison at Dallas, Pennsylvania, to the U.S. Penitentiary at Lewisburg, PA, and then to the U.S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. Although I had no part in this rebellion (having been at Dallas at the time) I was nevertheless singled out by the prison administration to be transferred over 1,000 miles from family, supporters, and friends with a view towards ultimately having me confined at the notorious federal prison at Marion, Illinois.

While being kept on 23 hours a day lockdown at Leavenworth, during November of 1989, my relatives and supporters mounted a campaign to reveal the lies and falsified records the Pennsylvania prison administration had used to implicate me in the Camp Hill rebellion, which was used as a basis for my transfer to Leavenworth and there to be evaluated for placement at Marion, Illinois. These efforts were successful and I was finally released to the general prison population in December of 1989.

Starting in 1991, I was locked down in solitary confinement. In 2014, after a public pressure campaign, I was transferred into general population. I remain a committed New Afrikan freedom fighter, who will not rest until the New Afrikan peoples are free from oppression, and a free and self-governing nation.

Free Russell Maroon Shoatz

Write to Maroon at:

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Post Office Box 33028
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Local groups supporting Maroon:

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Russell Maroon Shoatz



**Black Liberation Army
New Afrikan
Prisoner of War**

