

Green Scares and Marie Mason

Despite supporters world wide–Mason loses appeal

Fifth Estate Collective

2011

Marie Mason, who is serving the longest prison term of any Green Scare prisoner, lost her appeal as the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati on December 16 upheld her almost 22-year sentence for two acts of eco-sabotage. Following oral arguments in front of the court in October, Mason's attorney, Anastatse Markou, said he was encouraged by the questions the judges asked about the harshness of the sentence which is the basis of the appeal, but it came to naught. As usual, American justice, not impartially blindfolded to her supplicants, but with one eye open, winked obscenely at the power she serves so dutifully. Green Scare is the name given to recent prosecutions of radical environmental and animal liberation activists who are labeled terrorists by the government and given exceptionally long sentences. No one has been killed or injured as a result of their actions. Mason accepted a plea agreement that called for a sentence of 15–20 years, although the judge tacked on even more time to the maximum agreed upon with the prosecution. It's not clear whether any further avenues within the legal system are worth pursuing. An appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, given its right-wing composition, and the cost involved, makes it probably prohibitive. In early July, Mason was remanded to solitary confinement for a month before being transferred to a facility in Fort Worth, Texas. She was told by prison officials at Federal Correction Institution (FCI) Waseca (Minnesota) that her confinement and transfer, during which she was not allowed to retain many of her personal belongings including books and photos, was "administrative" and not punitive. Mason had been a model prisoner and was teaching guitar to other prisoners. She was known for her peacekeeping efforts inside the prison. Mason's plea agreement included the crime of arson at the Michigan State University Biotechnology Support Project in East Lansing, Michigan, a genetically modified organism (GMO) research site. In 1999, she and her husband at the time, Frank Ambrose, set fire to research records at the lab causing considerable damage to the building. Ambrose became a snitch for the federal government almost ten years later, taping incriminating conversations with Mason, and later with dozens of other activists around the country at the behest of the FBI. Ambrose is serving a nine-year term in spite of all his work as a government informant. He was sentenced by US District Judge Paul Maloney who also presided in Mason's case. Ambrose and Mason had been divorced prior to their arrests. There were initial fears that Mason had been transferred to a newly established Communications Management Unit (CMU) at the Federal Medical Center (FMC) Carswell in Fort Worth. In CMUs, prisoners are subjected to a heavily repressive regimen that allows only severely reduced contact with friends and family. Lawyers with the New York City-based Center for Constitutional Rights say the feds have consistently denied that Carswell is a CMU. However, the wing Mason is in is clearly a special control unit, and has restrictive conditions. Carswell's web site states that it "provides specialized medical and mental health services to female offenders," but the facility is notorious for its bad services for ill or disturbed prisoners and has been the subject of past law suits. Although Mason says she preferred the prison in Minnesota with its larger population, she is reconstructing her life at Carswell and reports that she has improved access to fresh foods to accommodate her vegan diet. Mason receives support from environmentalists and animal rights activists world-wide, many who do not approve of her tactics, but are appalled at her harsh sentence. She says she wants to assure them that, contrary to rumors, she steadfastly maintains her

vegan diet even though so doing was beginning to erode her health given the lack of proper food at the Minnesota facility. Supporters help provide Mason with money for food of her choice from the prison commissary, stamps, clothing, supplies, phone calls and internet communication. Mason's son and daughter receive stipends from the Rosenberg Fund for Children that makes grants to the offspring of persecuted activists. The fund is administered in part by Robert Meerpol, one of the two children of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were executed as atomic spies in 1953 following a frame-up trial. In other developments, Mason urgently asks that her supporters not send money directly to her commissary account, since when it reaches a certain level the government confiscates the overage to pay toward her \$4 million restitution she has been ordered to repay. All donations should be sent to her mother, Karin Mason, at PO Box 352, Stanwood MI 49346. Money sent to her is put into Mason's commissary account as needed. Please circulate this information. Benefits continue to support Mason including recent ones in Cincinnati, and another in October in Detroit's Trumbullplex featuring singer/songwriter David Rovics which raised over \$700. Mason welcomes mail, but please contact her before sending her anything other than a letter to insure she can receive a particular item. Her address is: Marie Mason #04672-061 FMC Carswell P.O. Box 27137 Fort Worth, TX 76127

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In other depressing legal news, Green Scare prisoner, Eric McDavid, sentenced to almost 20-years imprisonment for conspiring to commit a crime with a government informant following a frame-up trial, had his appeal for a re-hearing denied before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. This essentially ends all legal remedies for him. Details are at his site: supporteric.org.



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