

Marius Mason Update

Panagioti Tsolkas

2025

Marius Mason, an anarchist, environmental/animal rights activist, vegan, and trans advocate was denied his scheduled Gender Affirming Surgery by the Trump administration and transferred to a women's prison. The Republican candidate's campaign spent \$27 million on ads condemning gender surgery for prisoners and the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) quickly remanded those detained back to prisons corresponding to their birth gender.

Marius is serving nearly 22 years for acts of property damage carried out in defense of the planet. After being threatened with a life sentence in 2009 for acts of sabotage, he pleaded guilty to arson charges at a Michigan State University lab researching genetically modified organisms for Monsanto and twelve other acts of property damage. No one was physically harmed in these actions. At sentencing, the federal judge applied a so-called "terrorism enhancement," adding almost two years to an already extreme sentence requested by the prosecution, for a total of 22 years of incarceration and a multi-million dollar fine. This is the harshest punishment of anyone convicted of environmental sabotage.

Marius began his incarceration in the high security Administration Unit at the Federal Medical Center Carswell in Fort Worth, Texas. The unit was meant to house prisoners "with histories of escapes, chronic behavior problems, repeated incidents of assaultive or predatory behavior, or other special management concerns..." according to the Carswell information packet. Marius did not have a record of violating prison rules, but it was apparent that he was being held in this unit because of his political beliefs.

Through constant advocacy, in 2017, Marius was finally moved to a unit more closely resembling general population. In 2019, his request for transfer to be closer to family and friends was granted and he was sent to the federal penitentiary at Danbury, Conn.

While in prison, Marius continues studying, making art, and contributing to the wellbeing of his fellow prisoners. His paintings have had several exhibitions and he has written articles for the Fifth Estate including one in this issue. Because of accumulated good time, he has a year and a half to go on his sentence. A next step in long-term support is in gathering resources for post-release life.

His fight for trans rights

Marius came out to friends, family and supporters as transgender in 2014. Previously known as "Marie Mason," he changed his name, uses he/him pronouns, and embarked on a course to get a medical diagnosis that would allow him to seek gender affirming surgery and hormone therapy.

The BOP diagnosed Marius as having gender dysphoria, and made clothing and commissary accommodations in accordance with their established policy. Subsequently, Carswell ran medical diagnostic tests to screen him as being healthy enough to receive the care he requested. Finally, in 2016, Marius received his first "T" hormone (testosterone) injection. In 2021, he won his fight to be transferred to the male section at Danbury.

Mason had been approved by the BOP for gender-affirming surgery in 2022. He was transferred from the Danbury male facility after living there for two years to a federal prison medical facility in Fort Worth, where he was to undergo surgery. This was the culmination of a 10-year process beginning in 2013 when Mason asked to be considered for the new BOP transgender medical policy after a lawsuit created a pathway to medical transition.

But in January 2025, on Trump's first day, his fascist-right administration issued an anti-trans Executive Order denying gender-affirming medical care to trans prisoners, among other scapegoating attacks. As a result, Marius was denied surgery and moved back to the women's unit at Danbury.

Lawyers with the ACLU and other organizations challenged the order, arguing its violation of the 8th and 14th Amendments. In February 2025, an injunction was granted in a D.C. case. This ought to have constrained the BOP and preserved the status quo, meaning that all trans prisoners, including Marius, should have remained where they were and continue to receive the healthcare they were already receiving. But it has not been applied consistently, and as a series of lawsuits continue to wind their way through the courts. It remains to be seen whether the current administration will care about compliance with judicial orders.

His activist history

Marius has a long history of activism going back to his high school years. Born in 1962, his early activism included anti-war and environmental organizing, as well as anti-nuclear work and writing for the *Fifth Estate*. As Marius deepened his involvement in environmental and animal rights campaigns, he organized non-violent civil disobedience direct action campaigns, including ones to protect public lands, tree-sits to protest development, and anti-fur demonstrations.

Marius' advocacy also involved work with many conservation and human rights groups tackling issues of water grabs and poverty, while fighting to create local spaces like community gardens. His work spans many organizations, such as Earth First!, Sweetwater Alliance, Food Not Bombs, ADAPTT (Animals Deserve Protection Today and Tomorrow), and through Anarchist Black Cross Books for Prisoners. He was active on workers' rights issues, primarily through involvement with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) for nearly two decades.

Marius needs our mutual aid for his remaining time in prison and for when he is eventually released.

Venmo donations can be made through Fifth Estate (@Fifth-Estate). Please include a comment noting your donation is for Marius. Funds can be sent via checks or money orders, made out to Julie Herrada or Peter Werbe, with "Marius Mason" on the subject line, and mailed to: Support Marius Mason, PO Box 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220.

Additionally, writing letters is one of the most important things you can do. Letters are a lifeline for those inside prison walls. As a federal prisoner, Marius has not been able to effect his name change through legal channels, so it is important for mail to be addressed to "Marie (Marius) Mason" on the envelope, along with his prisoner number. See his address below and the guidelines for letter-writing at supportmariusmason.org

Another way to support Marius is by organizing for both the Jan 22 Trans Prisoner Day of Action and the International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason and All Anarchist Prisoners on June 11 of each year.

Write Marius at:

Marie (Marius) Mason #04672-061

Federal Satellite Low

33 1/2 Pembroke Rd. Rte. 37

Danbury CT 06811

As with all political and environmental prisoners, they're in there for us; we're out here for them.

Panagioti Tsolkas is a former editor at the *Earth First! Journal* and *Prison Legal News*, and a current member of the Agency editorial working group.

Related

Visit the Marius Mason support site at <http://www.supportmariusmason.org/>



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<https://www.fiftheastate.org/archive/417-winter-2025/marius-mason-update>
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