

Mumia Abu-Jamal remembers Black Panther Chip Fitzgerald

written by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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Romaine Chip Fitzgerald

May 28 — The name Romaine “Chip” Fitzgerald is perhaps not widely known except

for his supporters. In his wild youth decades ago, he was a teenage member of the LA chapter of the Black Panther Party, which he joined after a brief stint in jail. He was a wild boy at a wild time in history, the 1960s, when it seemed like the very world was on fire.

Chip once fell in with a crew of wild boys who were full of mischief, which landed him in reform school, known as Juvenile Hall, run by the California Youth Authority. Chip's youthful rebelliousness led to stints in solitary where, now surrounded by silence, he read about and became captivated by the Black freedom movement.

These articles awakened him to the existence of the Black Panther Party, the boldest of Black freedom movements in the 1960s era. Upon his release, Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald formally joined the militant revolutionary organization. Chip took to the party like a fish takes to water by helping its free breakfast programs, selling Panther newspapers, and assisting in other party programs.

According to others who joined at the same time, Chip was an enthusiastic member, and more importantly, his mother proudly supported his new commitment to community work.

But good times sometimes don't remain good, for 1969 marked Chip's involvement in two shootings, leaving one victim dead. It also marked his return to prison as an adult. These charges, and California's antipathy towards Black Panthers, led to Chip's incarceration for 52 years despite his eligibility for parole in 1976.

On March 28, 2021, Chip, who suffered from a massive stroke, passed away in a California hospital while lying in shackles. Chip was the longest held ex-Black Panther in America. Romaine Chip Fitzgerald, after over a half century in chains, returns to his ancestors.

From imprisoned nation, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Source: [*Prison Radio*](#)

