

Historical Moments of Policing, Violence, and  
Resistance



JON BURGE AND  
CHICAGO POLICE TORTURE

Vol. 8  
March 2013



# ABOUT THIS SERIES

In the last few months of 2011 into early 2012, the issue of police violence once again burst into the mainstream with the treatment of Occupy protesters.

While we were appalled at the violence directed at peaceful protesters by law enforcement, we were also dismayed that this phenomenon was treated as a novel one. The incidents were discussed in a way that was divorced from historical context. After all, the black and white images of police dogs being unleashed on peaceful protesters during the black freedom movement of the 1950s and 60s would not have been alien to the young people who were abused by law enforcement in New York and Oakland at the Occupy protests. Police violence is unfortunately not new.

In an attempt to inject some historical memory into the current considerations of police violence, Project NIA and the Chicago Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) Teaching Collective decided to develop a series of pamphlets to inform and educate the broader public about the longstanding tradition of oppressive policing toward marginalized

populations (including some activists and organizers).

This series titled Historical Moments of Policing, Violence & Resistance features pamphlets on various topics including: Oscar Grant, the Mississippi Black Papers, Slave Patrols, the Young Lords, the 1968 Democratic Convention, the Danzinger Bridge Shootings, Black Student Protests on College Campuses, Timothy Thomas, Resistance to Police Violence in Harlem, and the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre, among others.

The pamphlets are available for free downloading at [www.policeviolence.wordpress.com](http://www.policeviolence.wordpress.com). Please spread the word about the availability of these publications.

Series Conceived and Published by Project NIA ([www.project-nia.org](http://www.project-nia.org)) and Chicago PIC Teaching Collective ([www.chicagopiccollective.com](http://www.chicagopiccollective.com)).

## SPECIAL THANKS

We could not have created this pamphlet without the decades of work done around Jon Burge and Chicago police torture by the dedicated community members involved in the many different campaigns and the attorneys at People's Law Office (PLO). These coalitions and individuals worked tirelessly for decades to bring this story to light. We are so thankful for the incredible resources they have created, gathered, and made available to us all – we have merely tried to summarize their work in here. We are particularly grateful to Flint Taylor and Joey Mogul of PLO for providing especially useful resources, and to Joey for reviewing this pamphlet for us.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every single person who worked on this series volunteered his or her time to this effort. We are grateful beyond words for your support and for your talents. Special thanks to the following people who have contributed to making this project possible:

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## ABOUT THE CREATORS

**Marissa Faustini** and **Sharlyn Grace** met in 2005 while doing campus organizing against war and racism and publishing a radical magazine. Once they taught a class on nonviolence and social change to their peers. Marissa is still improving the world as a therapist in Chicago public schools, and Sharlyn might one day do something good with a law degree. They would like to see the prison industrial complex destroyed.

## OVERVIEW OF CHICAGO POLICE TORTURE, 1972-1991<sup>1</sup>

Between 1972 and 1991, Chicago Police Department (CPD) officers tortured over 114 African American men, women, and youth. Victims were as young as 13 years old, and at least 26 officers were involved. Detective Jon Burge, the leader of CPD's Area 2 midnight shift on the majority African American South Side of Chicago, appears to have been primarily responsible for introducing torture techniques to CPD.

Burge's torture techniques included electric shock, suffocation, burns, many kinds of beatings, use of cattle prods, use of nooses, mock executions with guns, and genital pain. Burge served as a military police sergeant in a Prisoner of War camp during the Vietnam War before

becoming a CPD officer, and he likely learned the electric shock tactic during the war.<sup>2</sup> The practical goal of the torture was often to produce confessions that could be used to convict suspects or others of crimes under the purview of Area 2's investigatory responsibilities, raising Area 2's arrest and conviction rates and assisting Burge's rapid rise through the CPD ranks. The torture was systemic and rooted in deeply held racist beliefs. Burge and his men referred to the apparently homemade electrical device they used to shock men with as the "nigger box." The torture became an "open secret" among both the CPD and African American communities.

## 1982: THE CPD RAMPAGE FOLLOWING THE MURDER OF TWO CPD OFFICERS,

## AND THE TORTURE OF ANDREW WILSON

By the early 1980s, Burge was a Lieutenant in charge of investigating violent crimes in Area 2. When two white CPD officers were killed on the South Side in February 1982, Burge was put in charge of searching for the perpetrators. The ensuing manhunt created conditions on the South Side that some compared to Nazi Germany. Police kicked down doors, abused dozens of African American residents, and tortured numerous men they believed to have information about the killings. African American community groups eventually collected over 200 complaints about police misconduct during the manhunt, but neither the police department's internal review section nor government officials acted on the complaints. In



Andrew Wilson's Injuries

response, community activists took review into their own hands and conducted a community hearing where they discussed how the police had treated them.

Eventually, police found upon Andrew Wilson, and they proceeded to torture him both as a form of vigilante punishment and to elicit a confession that could be used to convict him of the murders. Burge and other officers put a bag over Mr. Wilson's head, burned him on a radiator, beat him, and applied electric shocks to his lips, ears, nose, and genitals. His injuries led to a medical examination by the prison health services, and the resulting documentation of Mr. Wilson's injuries proved to be crucial in shedding light on police torture at Area 2. The extent of his injuries even received some media attention at the time.

Though the medical director of prison health services wrote to CPD Superintendent Richard Brzeczek and emphatically stated the need for an investigation into the obvious police brutality that Mr. Wilson experienced, no such investigation occurred. At this time, Richard M. Daley—the future six-term Mayor of Chicago—was the Cook County State's Attorney. Brzeczek consulted with Daley over whether or not to investigate Mr. Wilson's injuries, and Daley decided to do nothing. Instead, both Brzeczek and Daley publicly applauded Burge for his performance following the police murders, and chose to use Mr. Wilson's tortured confession to convict him and sentence him to die.

Mr. Wilson filed his own pro se civil rights lawsuit from inside prison in 1986, alleging that he had been tortured by Burge and several other Area 2 officers. People's Law Office (PLO) began to represent Mr. Wilson in his case. Eventually, PLO received anonymous letters from a police insider that named other police officers and officials implicated in the torture scandal and also identified additional torture victim Melvin Jones. This and other leads from PLO's investigation, alongside ongoing pressure from community groups, was a turning point in collecting evidence of police torture and documenting the identities of victims and their stories.

During and after Mr. Wilson's civil rights trial in 1989,<sup>2</sup> over 50 community groups protested regularly outside of City Hall and CPD headquarters, demanding that officials investigate and stop the torture, and fire Jon Burge. The Task Force to Confront Police Violence was joined in the demonstrations by such diverse groups as

Citizens Alert, Clergy and Laity Concerned, ACT UP, and Queer Nation.

## **1990 TO THE PRESENT: THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE**

Despite the hard work of community activists and Andrew Wilson's attorneys, Burge remained unpunished until 1991. Many people believe that the lack of consequences following the publicity of the Wilson case further emboldened Burge. In the nine years following the 1982 manhunt, Burge and his men tortured at least 74 more people (the majority of the known victims). Community groups and advocates continued to put pressure on government officials, and in 1990, succeeded in forcing the Chicago City Council to hold a hearing on the torture allegations. In years afterward, they led marches to and sit-ins at City Hall, and also protested outside Mayor Daley's home.

Burge was suspended in 1991, following the release of damaging reports investigating the torture allegation from CPD's conduct review office. In 1993, Jon Burge was finally fired from the CPD upon the recommendation of its internal review board, following a trial in which three torture survivors testified.

Activists continued to demand justice for torture survivors—including those still in prison. Ten death row prisoners who were torture victims formed the Death Row 10. Groups including the Campaign to End the Death Penalty and the Aaron Patterson Defense Committee worked with death penalty abolition groups to highlight both the individual injustice of the Ten's cases and to bolster the argument that flaws in the Death Row 10's convictions disprove the certainty of guilt required even by most death penalty proponents. Their work was crucial in convincing Governor Ryan to pardon four torture survivors from death row on the basis of innocence in 2002.

Also in 2002, after forming the Campaign to Prosecute Police Torture, activists succeeding in getting special state prosecutors appointed to examine Burge and other CPD officers' conduct. Despite the wealth of evidence available by that point, the prosecutors did not indict Burge, and instead issued a report in 2006 detailing their findings that torture had certainly occurred in a few cases, and likely had in many others. Around this time, the Chicago chapter of the National Conference of Black Lawyers began holding town hall meetings, and the new group



Left, a BPAPT action; right, fliers by community groups

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**  
to Police Torture Decision

*If the City Forgives Jon Burge the People Won't!*

Commander John Burge  
Chicago Police Department

**DEMONSTRATE**  
12:00 NOON, City Hall, 5th Floor, Daley's Office  
The Work Day After the Police Board Decision  
TASK FORCE TO CONFRONT POLICE VIOLENCE (TFC) BOX 33551 CHICAGO

**Town Hall Meeting**

**Police Torture in Chicago:  
Should They Be Held Accountable?**

More than 66 African American men were tortured by electrocution, suffocation and severe beatings by former Chicago Police Department Commander Jon Burge and his officers at Aves 2 and 3 Police Headquarters in the '70s and '80s. Twelve of these men, known as the "Death Row 10," now sit on Illinois death row. No officer has been criminally investigated or prosecuted for his criminal conduct. State's Attorney Dick Davine, who could order a criminal investigation, defended Jon Burge in a civil suit brought against him by one of the torture victims - a clear conflict of interest. A petition has been filed in the Circuit Court of Cook County to request an independent, social prosecutor to investigate the police officer criminal acts of torture.

Join activists, religious leaders, family members of the torture victims and lawyers at this Town Hall Meeting to discuss what we can do to win a special prosecutor to investigate police torture.

**Wednesday, June 13, 6 - 8 pm**  
The Hothouse, 31 E. Balbo

**CAMPAIGN TO PROSECUTE POLICE TORTURE**

The Mass Information Ethics Center  
407 S. Dearborn, Ste. 2000 Chicago, Illinois 60605  
312.963.7392 or 312.963.7960

Donating Organizations: Asian Pacific Public Liberties Alliance; International Campaign to End the Death Penalty; Chicago Police Torture Survivors; Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty; Justice Center of Greater Chicago and the National Lawyers' Guild.

Music & Refreshments

**LIVE AFTER DEATH ROW:**  
**DEATH ROW 10**  
**POLICE TORTURE VICTIM**  
**SPEAKS OUT**

Before leaving office, former Governor George Ryan pardoned 4 police torture victims and expelled Death Row. Just innocent torture victims still remain behind bars!

A Death Row 10 member will call in from prison to tell his story. Come hear about how he was railroaded onto Death Row by ex-Cmdr Jon Burge, State's Atty. Dick Davine, and Mayor Daley!

**Additional Speakers:**  
John Robinson, Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty and Campaign to Prosecute Police Torture;  
Omar Saunders, RW2014, convicted by DNA evidence of brotherly hate. Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

**7pm Tuesday, March 18th**  
University Church  
57th and University Ave.  
5655 South University Ave.

**CAMPAIGN TO PROSECUTE POLICE TORTURE**  
**END THE PENALTY**

Black People Against Police Torture emerged and became a leading voice in the continuing struggle to hold Burge and others accountable. In response to the special prosecutors' inadequate report, activists wrote a shadow report detailing the evidence against Burge and other detectives, and government officials who failed to act or assisted in covering up the abuse. Unlike the original report, the shadow report emphasized the racist and systemic nature of the torture. It was eventually endorsed by over 200 local and national civil rights, human rights, and anti-racist organizations. Hearings in front of City Council and still more pressure from community groups finally led the federal prosecutor in Chicago, with the U.S. Department of Justice, to investigate Burge in 2007, and they ultimately charged him with three counts of obstruction of justice and perjury. In 2010, a jury found Jon Burge guilty; in 2011, he was sentenced to 4.5 years in federal prison. No other CPD officers involved in the torture have been indicted.

Activists and attorneys fighting to shed light on Chicago police torture also sought solutions beyond local or state bodies during this time period. Between 2005 and 2008, they presented evidence of CPD torture and the City's lack of accountability before the Organization of American States' Inter-American Committee on Human Rights in Washington, D.C.; the

United Nations Committee Against Torture in Geneva, Switzerland; and the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Committee Against Torture (CAT) issued a report that connected Chicago police torture to Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, and also called on the U.S. government to "promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigate" the police torture, and "bring the perpetrators to justice."<sup>4</sup> Though the CAT report alone was not enforceable, activists effectively used it to rally their organizing efforts and draw headline press attention.

In 2012, Chicago Reader reporter John Conroy premiered a play about the Chicago Police torture cases, "My Kind of Town," and the Chicago City Council unanimously passed a Resolution Against Torture supported by the Illinois Coalition Against Torture.<sup>5</sup> The resolution is symbolic in nature and declares Chicago to be a "torture free zone." While the resolution also resolves that the City will hold all perpetrators of torture accountable, it contains neither an apology nor provisions that directly, materially benefit torture survivors. Also in 2012, Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM) debuted an exhibit entitled "Opening the Black Box: The Charge is Torture" in which they chronicled the history of police torture and discussed appropriate ways to memorialize that history. Along with Black



Above, a death penalty protest; below, a bumper sticker; left, a statement scratched into a metal bench at Area 2 by torture survivor Aaron Patterson.

# Daley Supports POLICE COMMANDER BURGE'S TORTURE OF BLACKS

People Against Police Torture, CTJM continues to push for a reparations ordinance that would include an official apology, monetary reparations, a resource center, and counseling to the affected individuals and communities.<sup>6</sup>

In the end, at least 13 men were released from prison and exonerated (declared innocent) after having been wrongfully convicted as a result of Burge and other CPD officers' torture methods. The City of Chicago has paid over \$20 million to nine torture survivors who brought civil rights

In 2010, Jon Burge was finally convicted, by a jury, of perjury for lying about the torture. In 2011, he was sentenced to 4.5 years in federal prison. No other officers who worked with him have been indicted.

The City of Chicago has never formally apologized or provided compensation or other assistance to the majority of the torture survivors.



lawsuits, but it has never made an effort at more comprehensive reparations for torture survivors. Most victims have not been compensated financially, nor have they been provided with counseling or other assistance. Neither has the City acknowledged the powerful effect this history has had on the affected African American communities. At present, twenty torture victims remain in prison for sentences in which tortured confessions were used against them.

## STORIES FROM TORTURE SURVIVORS

**ANTHONY HOLMES** Mr. Holmes was tortured by Jon Burge and two other officers in 1973. In January of 2011, Mr. Holmes testified at Jon Burge's sentencing hearing for his perjury conviction, and the following description is composed of excerpts of that testimony.

"Burge electric shocked me and suffocated me and he forced me to confess to a murder I did not do. And, I had to accept that I was in the penitentiary for almost thirty years for something I didn't do.

I only had a couple bruises on my arm and a busted lip. But the rest of the injuries were internal from the electricity shot through me with the black box and Burge choking me with the plastic bag. He tried to kill me. It leaves a gnawing, hurting feeling. I can't ever shake it.

I still have nightmares, not as bad as they were, but I still have them. I wake up in a cold sweat. **I still fear that I am going to go back to jail for this again.** I see myself falling in a deep hole and no one helping me to get out. That is what it feels like. I felt hopeless and helpless when it happened, and when I dream I feel like I am in that room again, screaming for help and no one comes to help me. I keep trying to turn the dream around but it keeps being the

same. I can never expect when I will have the dream. I just lay down at night, and then I wake up and the bed is soaked.

I still think I shouldn't have let Burge do that to me, but there was nothing I could do. I keep thinking how I can get out of it, but there was nothing I could do. I remember looking around the room at the other officers and I thought one of them would say that was enough and they never did.

What I wanted to ask Burge was why did you do this? Why would you take a statement that you knew was not true. You were supposed to be the law. I don't understand it. I never will. Worse was Burge enjoyed it. He laughed while he was torturing me.

**I still get nervous when I see police.** I worry if this can happen again. There is always this inner fear that I will get tied into something I didn't do, and they will tie me up with something. You can never describe that first feeling when they call you or see you. There

is nothing I can do. That is why I no longer live in the City. I always have the fear with police—oh boy here they come. I am just a little or a lot paranoid....

The hardest part of being convicted and doing all the time was the effect it had on my family. They were left with no source of income from me and it was really hard on them.

I adjusted to my surroundings in the penitentiary, and then I had to worry about me. It was scary to go to prison for this. You can easily get killed if people think you are an informant or a stool pigeon. They tried to get me to say things about other people. That hurt.

I tried to get some help throughout the years but **no one listened to me because they thought the police were right.** "

Left to right: torture survivors Darrell Cannon, Anthony Holmes, Gregory Banks, and David Bates





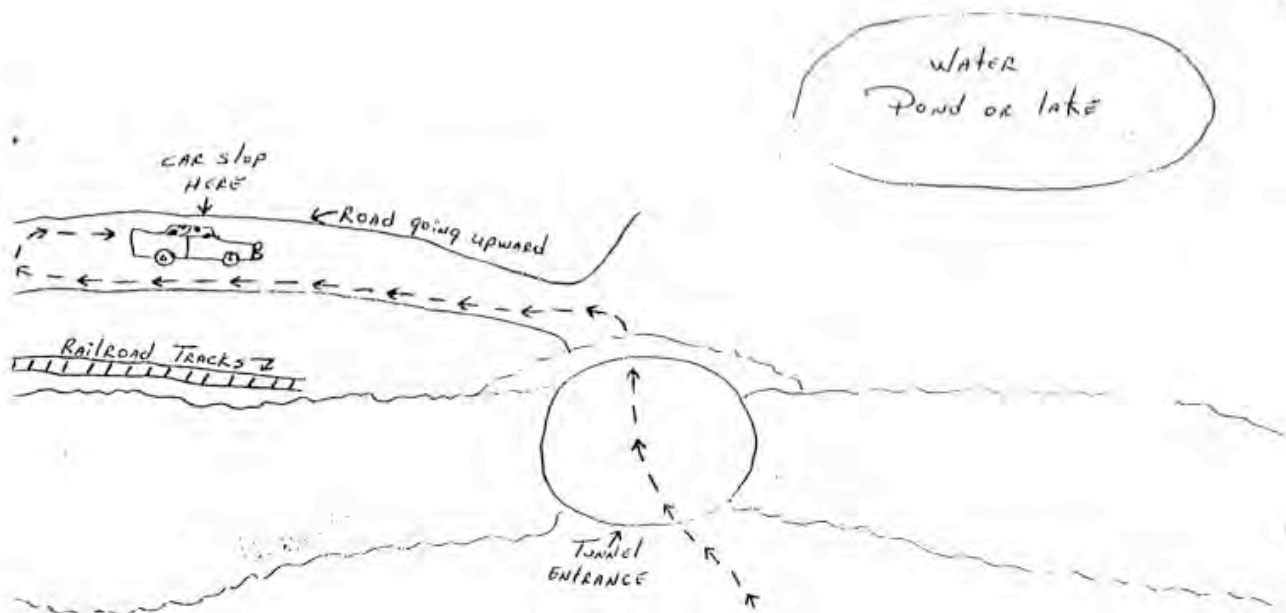
**DARRELL CANNON** Mr. Cannon was tortured by three CPD officers (Byrne, Dignan, and Grunhard) on November 2, 1983 at a remote site on the South Side of Chicago.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the false confession ultimately extracted from him, he was convicted of murder and spent 24 years in prison, including seven years in Tamms Supermax under conditions of isolation and sensory deprivation that constitute torture under international standards.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Cannon's conviction was overturned and he was released in 2007.

"They drove me to a site that I call the torture area. Where there's a big huge pipe you drive through and come out the other side, there's a river, and went up this hill. The railroad tracks were right there, and they turned the car around. They parked there, they got me out, and they told me, they said, "Nigger look around." And I looked around, and it was an isolated area. And they told me, "Nobody will hear or know anything about what has happened to you." And then that's when they started to ask me about the murder. . . .

[After the first technique they used was unsuccessful,] So then they went, they opened the trunk of the detective car, and Dignan got out a shotgun. And he told me, "Nigger, look." And he showed me the shotgun shell. "and now listen nigger" and he turned around. And I thought he was putting the shell in the shotgun, cause it sounded like that to me. Then he turned back around. "**Nigger, you're gonna tell us what we want to hear.**" When I replied "no," this is when he shoved the shotgun in my mouth. And when he shoved it in my mouth, he kept sayin', "You gonna tell me what I wanna hear?" And when I refused to do so, one of the other ones told him "pull the

trigger, blow that nigger's head off." And they pulled the trigger. They did this on three separate occasions. And the third time they did it, it seemed like, when I heard the trigger click that the back of my brains was being blown out. That's what my mind was telling me. And as a result of that, I could hear my hair on the back of my head stand up. . . .

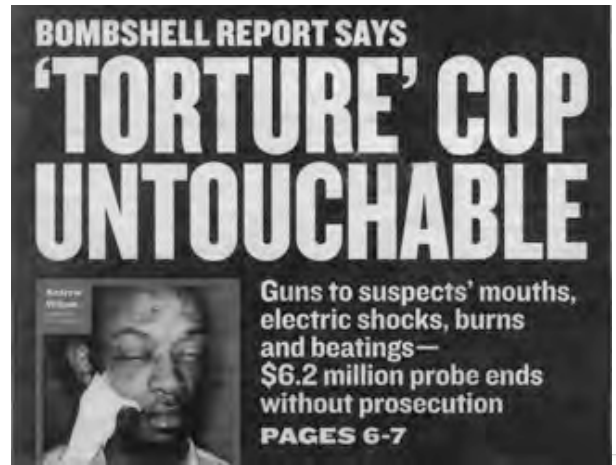
After that wasn't successful, they took me around to the back seat, on the passenger side of the car, and it was Byrnes that took the automatic and put it to my head and told me, "don't move" and they re-did the handcuffs from behind me to in front of me and then at that point, they made me sit down in the backseat of the car. They had pulled my pants and my shorts down. One of them that's dead now, Grunhard, had went around to the other side, the back door, opened the door, and he came in, and they made me sit down, and my hands was up in the air, and after I sat down, he grabbed them, [gestures over his head] and he had my hands so I couldn't rise back up. It was Sgt. Byrnes who first used the electric cattle prod on me, and at that time, he stuck it to my testicles, and I remember trying to kick him, and in the process of trying to kick him,



Mr. Cannon's drawing of the location where he was tortured



Above, Mr. Cannon speaking outside the federal courthouse in 2008, while Jon Burge was inside for a hearing; right, headlines from 2006 and 2010.



they ended up...Dignan was trying to step on one of my feet, Byrnes was trying to step on

the other one, and they kept hitting me with the cattle prod, telling me that they knew what had happened and they wanted me to confirm it, and they was asking me questions about it. And I refused to answer, and they kept hitting me with that cattle prod. I don't think we was there very long, but I know that, to me, it seemed like a long time. They ended up—me telling them "Okay, I'll tell you anything you wanna hear, anything" to get them to stop doing that. And then I got mad. I got mad because I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't stop them, I couldn't hurt them, because they had the advantage on me....

I eventually ended up seeing a state's attorney and signing a confession implicating myself in a crime that I had nothing to do with. And they locked me up downstairs in a basement that night and the next morning I went to court. I wasn't a human being to them, I was just simply another subject of theirs. They had did this to many others. But to them, it was fun and games. I was just "a nigger" to them. That's it. **They kept using that word like that was my name.** They had no respect for me

being a human being. I never expected "police officers" to do anything that barbaric. That was my first time, and it wasn't until later on that I understood what they meant when they said that I was in for the hardest day of my life. I understood that the next morning, when I went to court and replayed what had been done to me the day before, and they was right.

How did I feel? Anger, frustration, embarrassment, and all of those things still exist today. It hasn't changed; it's as if this was done to me yesterday. Those emotions I still feel. And for how much longer? I don't know. It's been 24 years and I never, I have never been able to get over it, and I don't know if I will. I just don't know. I have lost too much: my parents, my brother, my nephew, adopted son. So I don't know, but I keep on going, and I continue to talk about it regardless to how it makes me feel.

. . . [T]here's no doubt in my mind that in my case, that racism played a huge role in what happened to me because they enjoyed this. . . . If I'd have been white, I doubt very seriously that I'd have been treated that badly. **But because of the fact that I am Afro-American, who's gonna believe me in court? Nobody.**<sup>5</sup>

# POEM BY SURVIVORS

COLLAGE POEM – TORTURE SURVIVORS ROUNDTABLE, COMPILED BY CTJM  
SATURDAY OCT. 29, 2011

I'm a stubborn son-of-a-  
gun  
Just turned 60 in  
September  
Still a thorn in Chicago's  
side

As long as they're silent  
We're fighting a giant

\*\*\*

I've been counting  
There are 98 years  
Of incarceration among us

What you can't ever get  
back:

My aunt died  
I lost everything  
Every day is a struggle

\*\*\*

We understand how hard it  
is  
How hard it is to tell your  
story  
(the strength it takes  
to tell your story)

\*\*\*

I have never confessed to  
being an angel

What happened to me in  
1983:  
Electric cattle prod  
On my genitals, my mouth  
Hands behind my back

Who you see before you  
Is a very bitter man  
I would never tell you  
That I can forgive

In 24 years  
Death took my father,  
my mother, my son,  
grandfather, nieces,  
and nephews

Right now my stomach is  
in pain  
I would endure this every  
day  
to speak on behalf  
of the twenty-three  
Still inside

\*\*\*

A closet-sized  
interrogation room  
I was 16  
No one called my parents

Wouldn't learn  
wouldn't go to school  
My downfall

I ditched school  
But I went to museums

\*\*\*

I'm over my head  
A grown man grabbed my  
genitals  
And squeezed

A DA in a JC Penney blue  
suit said  
"I represent the people"

They came back and beat  
me again

If you grab somebody by  
the testicles,  
they'll say anything

\*\*\*

With a plastic bag over my  
head  
I had a chance to see their  
faces

They loved to make us cry

Can tell you  
About countless times  
I interviewed for a job  
Then the background  
check.

I was prepared—  
But they said,  
"call us  
when you get your  
innocence"

\*\*\*

They beat my son  
On the bottoms of his feet

I'm fighting for everyone's  
son  
I want my child to come  
home  
My son was 15  
He is 35 now...

Don't let yourself go down  
Your son has not gotten  
A death certificate  
He is being held hostage  
And hostages DO  
Get liberated

\*\*\*

Your pain  
Your trauma  
Your future

A trilogy:  
Abuse  
Incarceration  
Return

let this not be the end of  
this struggle.

All words and phrases come from the testimonies of David Bates, Darrell Cannon, Mark Clements, and Anthony Holmes, with a few from moderator Dorothy Burge and Ms. Plummer, mother of a still-incarcerated survivor, who spoke from the floor.

## Statements from Other CPD Officers

**William A. Parker, Sr.**, an African American former CPD Detective assigned to Area 2 accidentally walked in on a scene of police torture in 1972 or 1973. He heard “a shrill inhuman-type cry [that obviously] was someone in pain . . . where pain was being inflicted upon them.” Despite having been a police officer for more than 15 years, Parker said he “never heard the likes of” a cry like this before. Instinctively, he opened the door to the interrogation room. There, he saw Jon Burge and two white detectives standing over a black man who was handcuffed to a radiator. The man was on the floor and his pants were down. Parker saw one of the detectives hide something from view, which he later came to believe was the black box used to electrically shock Burge’s victims.<sup>9</sup>

**Doris M. Byrd** is also an African American former CPD detective. She described how Peter Dignan, one of the most central of Burge’s right-hand men, refused to work with her because she was Black and a woman. Later, in the early 1980s, Byrd did work at Area 2 with Burge. She described Burge and his men’s torture tactics featuring suffocation, beatings, and electric shock as “an open secret” among police officers there. Though her own shift only sometimes overlapped with Burge’s midnight shift, Byrd had heard screaming coming from the interrogation rooms used by Burge and his men. She also heard about the torture from numerous other police officers and even directly from victims themselves. Byrd stated that Burge’s supervisor at that time “pretty much let Burge do what he wanted to do.”<sup>10</sup>

Below is the first letter that People’s Law Office received from an anonymous CPD source during Mr. Wilson’s trial, directing them to further sources.

Mr. Flint Taylor:

I understand you all are representing Andrew Wilson in his civil action against several police officers for brutality.

Check the following:

Several witnesses including the White's were severely beaten at 1121 S State St in front of the Chief of Detectives, the Superintendent of Police and the State's Attorneys.

Mayor Byrne and States Attorney Daley were aware of the actions of the detectives. ASA Angarola told both of them and condoned the actions.

Several of the officers named in the suit had been previously accused of using torture machines at complaints given to OPS and in motions filed in Criminal trials.

The device was destroyed by throwing it off of Lt. Burge's boat.

Mayor Byrne and States Attorney Daley ordered that the numerous complaints filed against the police as a result of this crime not be investigated.

This order was carried out by an OPS investigator named Buckley who is close to Alderman Burke.

You should interview everyone assigned to Area 2 Violent Crime at that time because some of them were disgusted and will tell all. The torture was not necessary.

Russ Ewing of Channel 7 was investigating this matter and you should talk to him.

DO NOT SHOW THIS TO ANYONE. IF YOU WANT MORE PUT AN AD IN THE SOUTHTOWN ECONOMIST. YOU DO NOT HAVE PERMISSION TO SHOW THIS TO ANYONE IT IS PRIVILEGED.

City/suburbs



**Protesters not backing down**

Demonstrators at City Hall Tuesday demand disciplinary action be taken against police Cmdr. Jon Burge. Several similar protests have taken place since a federal judge declared a mistrial last year in a suit accusing Burge of beating a suspect in the killings of two officers.

References

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, information in this section came from G. Flint Taylor, *A Long and Winding Road: The Struggle for Justice in the Chicago Police Torture Cases*, 17(3) LOY. J. PUB. INT. L. (Summer 2012), and from materials provided to the creators by Joey Mogul.

<sup>2</sup> “[Torture victim Andrew] Wilson said Burge wired him up to a black box and turned a crank that generated an electric shock. This technique bore a striking resemblance to what American troops in Vietnam called ‘the Bell telephone hour’—shocking prisoners by means of a hand-cranked army field phone.” John Conroy, *Tools of Torture*, *The Chicago Reader*, Feb. 3, 2005, available at: <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/tools-of-torture/Content?oid=917876>.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Wilson’s original civil trial ended in a hung jury and the second in a split decision, but he was eventually awarded \$1.1 million after he won an appeal of his second trial in 1997.

<sup>4</sup> The full report is available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/133838.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> More info on Conroy’s play can be found at: [http://www.timelinetheatre.com/my\\_kind\\_of\\_town/index.htm](http://www.timelinetheatre.com/my_kind_of_town/index.htm). The full text of the City Council resolution can be read here: <http://8thdaycenter.org/content/resolution-proclaiming-chicago-be-torture-free-zone>.

<sup>6</sup> More info on the CTJM exhibit can be found here: <http://chicagotorture.org/#event-opening-black-box-reception>.

<sup>7</sup> Transcript of January 2008 interview with Darrell Cannon, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgCZ-qcjFto>. Interviewed by Kate Taylor and Jackie Rivet-Rivers.

<sup>8</sup> Tamms Year Ten is an organization of former Tamms prisoners and their families and allies that has worked to close Tamms since 2008. In January 2013, their efforts were successful and Tamms was closed. More information can be found at: <http://www.yearten.org/>. As part of efforts to close Tamms, many advocacy groups argued that the conditions in Tamms were indefensible and worked to force scrutiny of Tamms under international standards. The following are just some examples: Midwest Coalition for Human Rights, MCHR Letter to UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez Regarding Solitary Confinement in the U.S., Oct. 13, 2011, available at: [http://www.midwesthumanrights.org/resources/MCHR\\_Letter\\_RE\\_Prolonged\\_Solitary\\_Confinement.pdf](http://www.midwesthumanrights.org/resources/MCHR_Letter_RE_Prolonged_Solitary_Confinement.pdf) (“The Midwest Coalition for Human Rights urges timely action in response to the practice of prolonged solitary confinement in U.S. jails and prisons, which amounts to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. We ask that the Special Rapporteur promptly investigate the use of prolonged solitary confinement in supermaximum detention facilities and units throughout the United States, in particular Tamms Closed Maximum Security facility in Southern Illinois . . .”); Amnesty International USA: Midwest, available at: <http://amnestymidwest.tumblr.com/post/20912269249/conditions-at-tamms-supermax-prison-violate> (“Conditions at Tamms Supermax prison violate international standards for the humane treatment of prisoners and have been defined as torture by the UN Human Rights Committee and Committee against Torture.”).

<sup>9</sup> Sworn statement of William A. Parker, Sr. to Flint Taylor on October 4, 2004, available at: <http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/chicagotorture/torturebypolice/detectiveletters/WilliamAParkerSRStatement.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Sworn statement of Doris M. Byrd to Flint Taylor on October 4, 2004, available at: <http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/chicagotorture/torturebypolice/detectiveletters/DorisMByrdstatement.pdf>

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What role did the use of racial epithets (slurs) play in the torture?

What was the responsibility of the police officers and government officials who were not involved in the torture but knew about it?

How do the extreme actions of this somewhat limited group of cops relate to more general policing strategies?

Is there a connection between Burge's military experience and the torture? Is there a connection between the military industrial complex and the prison industrial complex? If so, what is that connection?

Why don't people label police violence as torture, even when they use the word to describe civilians hurting other civilians? What is the significance of this designation?

What is the appropriate community response to this history? Does it involve the criminal legal system (prosecution of those responsible)? If so, how does that reliance strengthen or weaken the prison industrial complex? If not, what does an alternative response look like?

What should be done now to compensate and heal the survivors, family members, and African American communities affected by this torture?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Many, many resources can be found at: <http://peopleslawoffice.com/issues-and-cases/chicago-police-torture/>.

A collection of articles by Chicago Reader investigative reporter John Conroy can be found at: <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/police-torture-in-chicago-jon-burge-scandal-articles-by-john-conroy/Content?oid=1210030>.

An abundance of resources is available through "Human Rights at Home: The Chicago Police Torture Archive" (last updated in 2007): <http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/chicagotorture/>.

Chicago Torture Justice Memorial's historical materials are available at: <http://chicagotorture.org/history/>.

To become involved in the efforts of Chicago Torture Justice Memorials in gaining reparations for the Chicago Police torture survivors and preserving this part of Chicago's history—and particularly the struggle for justice it represents—visit [www.chicagotorture.org](http://www.chicagotorture.org).

# Notes

# JON BURGE

## TORTURE INDEX

- 112 Number of people tortured by Burge and his men since 1972
- 12 Number of Chicago Police torture survivors sentenced to death
- 5 Number of Chicago Police torture survivors sentenced to death w
- 13 Number of Chicago Police torture survivors who have been exon
- 20 Number currently behind bars who were tortured into confession
- 22 Number of men who were electrically shocked with the electric s
- 23 Number of men who were suffocated with a plastic bag by police
- 2 Number of men who were attacked or had pain inflicted in their
- 6 Number of men beaten with objects by police
- 3 Number of men beaten with flashlights
- 3 Number of men beaten with a phone book
- 3 Number of men beaten with a rubber hose or pipe
- Number of men beaten with a bat
- Number of men threatened with a gun
- Number of men beaten with a gun
- Number of men who were called racial slurs
- Taxpayer dollars spent by the City to compensate 12 torture su
- Taxpayer dollars spent by the City to defend Jon Burge against