



# My Kind of Town

by **John Conroy**  
directed by Nick Bowling

---

## STUDY GUIDE

*Updated April 2019*

Prepared by  
Maren Robinson, Dramaturg

This Study Guide for *My Kind of Town* was prepared by Maren Robinson with contributions by John Conroy and PJ Powers and edited by Karen A. Callaway and Lara Goetsch for TimeLine Theatre, its patrons and educational outreach. Please request permission to use these materials for any subsequent production.

© TimeLine Theatre 2012 / 2019

# — STUDY GUIDE —

## Table of Contents

Preface: April 2019 .....	3
The Play: <i>My Kind of Town</i> .....	4
The Playwright: John Conroy .....	4
The Interview: Playwright John Conroy .....	4
The Scandal: Police Torture in Chicago .....	8
Defining Torture .....	10
The Terms: Law and Order .....	12
Timeline: A Selected History of Torture and Anti-torture Legislation .....	13
A Timeline of the Chicago Police Torture Scandal .....	17
Chicago: My Kind of Town .....	26
The Organizations .....	28
Discussion Questions .....	30
References and Additional Resources .....	31

**Download a PDF of the entire  
Study Guide at TimeLine’s website:  
[https://timelinetheatre.com/app/uploads/  
MyKindOfTown\\_StudyGuide\\_April2019.pdf](https://timelinetheatre.com/app/uploads/MyKindOfTown_StudyGuide_April2019.pdf)**

## Preface: April 2019

While the characters in *My Kind of Town* are not meant to represent any specific person tortured by Jon Burge or those under his command, the play is inspired by those events. Much has occurred since the play's world premiere, and it seemed important to offer an update on the real story that John Conroy broke as a reporter and revisited as a playwright. The study guide that follows remains the initial 2012 study guide, but this preface offers a few updates on the real story that is still unfolding in Chicago.

Since TimeLine Theatre's 2012 production of John Conroy's *My Kind of Town*, there have been additional developments in the Chicago police torture cases and the cases for reparations. Burge, convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice in 2010 and sentenced to four years in prison, was released in February 2015 and returned to his house in Florida. He continued to collect his Chicago Police Department pension.

**May 6, 2015—Whereas, the City Council wishes to acknowledge this exceedingly sad and painful chapter in Chicago's history, and to formally express its profound regret for any and all shameful treatment of our fellow citizens that occurred. — *The opening of the apology from the Chicago City Council to survivors of torture***

2015 also saw the passing of a comprehensive city council reparations ordinance, which among other things, authorized \$5.5 million in reparations to 57 torture survivors and included an official apology from the city. The reparations settlement also required Chicago Public Schools to teach 8th and 10th grade students about the torture cases and set aside funds for the construction of a public memorial for the tortured men. Paying reparations has rarely happened in the history of the United States.

Burge remained vitriolic and unapologetic when he heard of the reparations, saying through a spokesperson, "I find it hard to believe that the city's political leadership could even contemplate giving 'reparations' to human vermin."

In 2016, a new law was passed that allows the Torture Inquiry and Relief Commission to investigate the claims of anyone in Cook County who said their confession was brought about through torture. In May of 2017, the Chicago Torture Justice Center created by the 2015 city council ordinance opened its doors and began important work of supporting survivors of police torture with counseling and other services.

Jon Burge died at his home in Tampa, Florida on September 20, 2018. At the time of his death Burge and his officers were accused of torturing more than 100 people, the vast majority of whom were black. Settlements of lawsuits had grown to an estimated \$100 million dollars. Activists are still working toward the design and construction of a public memorial for the tortured men.

## The Play: *My Kind of Town*

*My Kind of Town* is John Conroy's first play. The script was developed beginning in 2007 with assistance from Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Northwestern University's School of Law, 16th Street Theatre, Writer's Bloc, and film and theater director John Hancock, before work began at TimeLine Theatre in 2010. Early readings and development were reported on by the *Chicago Reader*, *Time Out Chicago* and *The New York Times*, which wrote: "In the tradition of history and morality plays ... Mr. Conroy turned to theater as a means of provocation and catharsis."

## The Playwright: John Conroy

John Conroy was born in Chicago and graduated from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He was instrumental in exposing the Chicago police torture scandal involving allegations against Commander Jon Burge and others. Over the course of the last three decades, he has repeatedly reminded an indifferent public that justice had not been done. Much of his coverage of the issue is in his widely praised book, *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People: The Dynamics of Torture* (Knopf, 2000) and the Chicago Reader's John Conroy Archive at [chicagoreader.com/police\\_torture](http://chicagoreader.com/police_torture). Conroy is the author of *Belfast Diary: War as a Way of Life* (Beacon Press, 1987, 1995). He has written for the *Chicago Tribune*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *GQ*, *Mother Jones*, *Granta* and many other publications. He has won numerous awards for his journalism.



## The Interview: Playwright John Conroy

During rehearsals for *My Kind of Town*, TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) talked with acclaimed investigative journalist and first-time playwright John Conroy (JC) about bringing this story to the stage.

**(PJP)** How did you learn about allegations of torture in the Chicago Police Department, and when and how did you investigate?

**(JC)** In 1989, at the suggestion of an editor in New York, I was investigating the possibility of doing a book on torture. I wanted to work with the editor (Ann Close) and with her publishing house (Alfred A. Knopf), though I was

afraid I might end up writing a “noble” book that no one would read. I did a lot of reading on the subject, and the more I read, the more interested I got in torturers—whom, I learned, are people like you and me. I started to think of the book as a way of putting the reader into the torturer’s shoes, and so I began looking for cases that would not seem so foreign to Americans.

I’d mentioned this to a friend and fellow journalist, and she called me one day and said, “There’s a trial coming up next week in federal court, a civil suit. Andrew Wilson, the guy who killed those two policemen in 1982, claims he was tortured by detectives at Area 2. Maybe you might want to go.” I didn’t expect much, but thought it would do no harm to get a sense of what it was about.

After hearing Wilson testify and seeing the photos of his injuries—particularly those of his ears, laden with puncture marks left by alligator clips—I was hooked. Twenty-three years later, with men still in prison on the basis of suspect confessions taken at Area 2, I’m still writing about it.

The noble book was published by Knopf in 2000. I can’t say no one has read it, but sometimes I think I’ve probably met everyone who has.

**(PJP)** Your first article about this, “House of Screams,” was in 1990 in the *Chicago Reader*. You had no articles on it again until 1996, then wrote 22 pieces over the next 11 years, finally prompting other news outlets to join in. So, what happened in that initial six years after “House of Screams”? Why didn’t that article launch the citywide fury it should have?

**(JC)** Keep in mind it was a different age of journalism then. Although the *Reader* was a weekly, we saw the dailies as our competitors. Both were well staffed, and the thinking was they could throw three reporters on any story you’d broken and in a couple of days it would be theirs, not yours. So after “House of Screams,” my editor told me to move on, and I understood completely. The dailies surely were going to take up the story, and we’d never know it until we picked up a paper one day and there it would be.

What we didn’t anticipate was that the papers and the rest of the media would cover it as periodic incidents, coverage hinged to events, not as something deep and broad and ongoing. The Police Board hearings on Commander Jon Burge’s employment in 1992 were covered, but only on a surface level, as if he were largely acting alone—without the participation of a good number of other officers, without a wink and a nod from his superiors and the state’s attorney’s office—and as if the handful of survivors who testified were just witnesses, not just a few of the scores of men tortured, some of whom were scheduled to be executed for crimes they had confessed to but had not done.

When the Police Board released its decision to fire Burge in 1993, both papers had his photo on the front page. Although that decision never used the word “torture” and never spelled out in precise detail what the board thought Burge

had done, it was clear that he'd been fired as a result of the allegations of electric shock, suffocation and pressing Wilson against a hot radiator. So, at that point, millions of people in Chicago were aware of the torture scandal, and I was sure the media coverage would increase.

It didn't. The whole city's indifference is what prompted our second story, "Town Without Pity," which examined the passive bystander phenomenon: why people don't act when they become aware of an emergency. After that, we just kept going, though not without our doubts as the years passed. Not much seemed to change and the outrage we thought should appear failed to materialize.

As for why this scandal has failed to ignite public outrage, I think it has a lot to do with a willingness on the part of every society to cordon off some section of the citizenry—an "out" group that is beyond the pale of our compassion, a torturable class to whom anything can be done. In this case, that group was black men, most with criminal records.

**(PJP)** You have devoted a good portion of your career to a subject that most people would rather not discuss. What sparked this fascination and what drives you to continue?

**(JC)** I don't think its fascination so much as horror. What initially drew me in was the realization that torture was done by ordinary people. After a while, I tried to give it up, but I started to feel responsible—an absurd and grandiose feeling, yes. I thought that if somebody who'd been tortured here was executed, it would be partly my fault for having given up. After Gov. George Ryan emptied death row, I realized that a sentence of life, or even a sentence of decades, didn't seem much different than the death penalty. By that time, I'd also realized that the problem was more than torture, that there were multiple other causes that contribute to wrongful convictions.

However, it's virtually impossible to make a living by writing with that specialty. So although I feel like my hand is still on the hoe, I've had to do other things along the way to pay the mortgage.

**(PJP)** When and what made you decide to write a play?

**(JC)** In 2007, I got a call from theater and film director John Hancock, who was then producing and directing two plays at Theatre Building Chicago. Over coffee, he said he thought there might be a play set against the backdrop of the police-torture scandal and asked if I'd like to try writing it. I didn't want anyone else to do it, so I said yes.

The idea was, if all went well, John might produce it. However, the revenue from the plays at the Theatre Building didn't suggest that a third Hancock production was a wise course, so I started taking the play elsewhere. But I wouldn't have written it but for John's suggestion.

**(PJP)** One thing that has fascinated me is that you decided to move outside your journalistic world. You didn't create a docudrama or an exposé on specific people or stories. Instead, you used years of reporting as inspiration to create a more universal and, ultimately, multifaceted dramatic text. What led you to write the play in this style?

**(JC)** I thought if it was a docudrama or an exposé of a specific case, it would be more easily dismissed as a peculiar incident in American history. I saw what happened here as something that could happen anywhere.

And, in fact, it has happened in places all over the country—police officers, jail and prison officials and administrators at juvenile detention facilities all have engaged in torture. We just don't like to call it that.

**(PJP)** In what ways has the play evolved since its start?

**(JC)** It's gotten tighter, more focused and more dramatic. I've changed the personalities of some characters, jettisoned others, spread the guilt around, compressed the time period and changed the ending. It has been quite a process.

**(PJP)** This experience is your first foray in working in the theater, correct? Has this always been a goal of yours?

**(JC)** Yes, it is my first such foray, and, no, this hasn't always been a goal, except in the sense that writing fiction has been a goal. I just never imagined I'd be writing that fiction for the stage.

**(PJP)** What has the experience at TimeLine been like so far, going through a script-development process, countless meetings, workshops and now, rehearsals?

**(JC)** It has been a great ride. I've been stimulated, stretched and, occasionally, thrown by what has come my way. I've been impressed by the hard work and dedication of everyone who has worked on the play, particularly you and Nick (Bowling, the director). It has been wonderful to work with such a large group of people who are not only very good at what they do, but also great human beings.

**(PJP)** What has surprised you along the way?

**(JC)** A few editorial suggestions initially threw me for a loop—in part, I think, because the journalist in me clung to certain conventions that weren't relevant for the stage. I've been surprised by the actors—the questions they've asked about characters, the way they've delivered certain lines and interpreted the roles they're playing. I'm amazed at the use of music (I never imagined any), the set design, the planning for the lobby display and the myriad detail that goes into a production.

**(PJP)** The play unquestionably is rooted in Chicago, yet its issues surely translate to any other community. How do you think other places might relate to its story? Do you have aspirations to see this play produced in other cities?

**(JC)** I do, indeed, have aspirations to see this play produced elsewhere. My hope is that audiences anywhere would come to understand the motivations of all the characters and thereby realize it could happen locally; that it already might be happening, to some extent, in their “kind of town” and they might be playing a role in allowing it to continue.

**(PJP)** What is one action you hope audience members might be inspired to do after seeing your play?

**(JC)** In Chicago, I hope they might examine their consciences, wonder what they’ve done, haven’t done or didn’t even think about doing in relation to the ongoing scandal here. I’d like all audiences to address the basic questions posed here: No matter what someone has done or is suspected of having done, should we torture them to get a confession? And who is responsible for that torture?

**(PJP)** Has this experience given you the urge to write more for the theater?

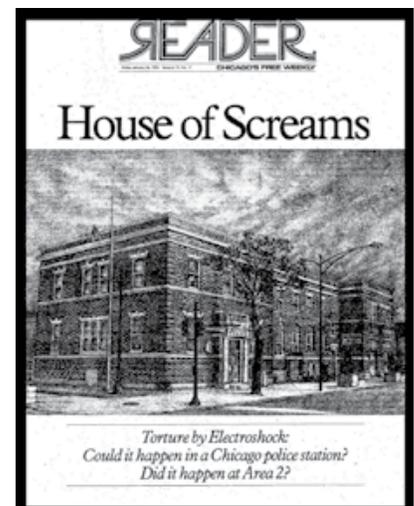
**(JC)** I think the experience has given me the urge to pray for good reviews, for a positive response from the audience and for what a member of the Company described as “the elusive second production.” If I get one of the three, I’ll be better able to answer your question.

## The Scandal: Police Torture in Chicago

*“As journalists, we failed to ignite the appropriate public and governmental outrage, and we failed to really achieve any significant reform in the system that enabled the torture.” — John Conroy*

On Jan. 26, 1990, John Conroy’s article “House of Screams” was published, his first cover story for the *Chicago Reader* on alleged police torture at the Chicago Police Department (CPD). Conroy worked for more than a year on the article, which was nearly 20,000 words. The article brought up torture allegations relating to Andrew Wilson, who, with his brother Jackie, was arrested and charged with the murder of two Chicago police officers, William Fahey and Richard O’Brien.

Although there was little public response to the article, it did prompt CPD’s Office of Professional Standards (OPS) to investigate allegations of torture in Area 2.



And over the next 17 years, Conroy would report on what was emerging as a major scandal. Allegations of torture came from a variety of individuals, including minors, who had been processed through Areas 2 and 3, where Jon Burge served as commander. The incidents described, alleged to have taken place over the course of 20 years, were eerily similar and often involved electroshock on the genitals or suffocation with a plastic bag or typewriter cover, forms of torture that would not leave marks. Often the torture was used to extract a confession.

The OPS investigation resulted in the suspension of Burge and some of his officers. It found that there was a preponderance of evidence to support that physical abuse did occur, that it was systematic, and that members of CPD either participated in or ignored it.

The People's Law Office, which has represented many of the torture survivors in civil suits, so far has found more than 100 black men who allege torture. The total number of survivors is unknown and could be considerably higher. Edward J. Egan and Robert D. Boyle were appointed as special prosecutors to investigate the torture allegations. After four years and \$7 million, they found there had been torture, but sought no indictments.

Only Burge, who was fired on Feb. 11, 1993, has been charged with a crime in relation to the torture allegations. In 2010, he was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice in federal court related to statements he made about the alleged torture. U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald could not charge him for any acts of torture because the statute of limitations had passed on those offenses. He is serving 4 ½ years. He still receives his police pension.

Recently, former Mayor Richard M. Daley, the Cook County state's attorney during the time frame in which many of the prisoners allegedly were tortured, has agreed to be deposed in the Michael Tillman case, one of the torture cases still in ongoing civil litigation.

## Defining Torture

*“The truth is that there has not been a war in history in which torture has not been employed in some form or another, and sometimes to excellent effect.”*

— British historian Andrew Roberts, “How Torture Helped Win WWII,” *The Daily Beast*, May 13, 2009<sup>1</sup>

*“Torture: Existence of a specific purpose plus intentional infliction of severe suffering or pain”*

— The International Committee of the Red Cross

Greek and Roman law first permitted the torture of slaves, then an increasingly large group of individuals. It was assumed a slave would not tell the truth and evidence would need to be gained by torture.<sup>2</sup> Between the 13th and 18th centuries, torture was used as a central component of extracting confessions from heretics.<sup>3</sup> But the Enlightenment (mid-17th century through the 18th) led many European countries to outlaw torture.<sup>4</sup>

In the 20th and 21st centuries, though, it is clear torture continues to be used around the world, including by the Nazis and the Japanese army during World War II, by fascist regimes in Italy and Spain, during the Vietnam War, by repressive governments throughout South America and Africa, in the Balkans, and by government-sanctioned forces in Northern Ireland and police in the United States.

Today, it is much easier to relegate torture to the past, or to assign it to other nations—being done by people unlike ourselves.

In recent years it also has become increasingly difficult to prove torture. Without first-hand testimony or documented evidence, it is notoriously difficult to prove. In many cases it is deliberately not documented, and allegations often revolve into competing stories about what happened behind closed doors. Because those who inflict torture often use methods that do not leave marks—such as waterboarding (causing individuals to experience the sensation of drowning), sleep deprivation, subjection to noise or forcing individuals into stressful positions for a protracted period of time— physical evidence is more difficult to produce.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2009/05/13/how-torture-helped-win-wwii.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.univie.ac.at/bimtor/prohibitionoftortureandilltreatment/355>

<sup>3</sup> *Torture and the Law of Proof* - John L Langbein

<sup>4</sup> *Torture* - Edward Peters

<sup>5</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* - John Conroy, P 31-38

The legal and international definitions and standards of torture are fraught and have been interpreted differently from country to country, depending on their interests. Countries are more likely to define a behavior as torture if it is being used on their citizens than if they are using it on citizens of another country. Even international definitions are open to interpretation: What constitutes “ill treatment”? What is a “significant level of humiliation or degradation”?

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) doesn’t use the word torture. Rather, the broad term “ill-treatment” is used to cover a wide variety of abuse prohibited by international law, including “inhuman, cruel, humiliating, and degrading treatment, outrages upon personal dignity and physical or moral coercion.” ICRC goes on to explain:

“The legal difference between torture and other forms of ill treatment lies in the level of severity of pain or suffering imposed. In addition, torture requires the existence of a specific purpose behind the act—to obtain information, for example. The various terms used to refer to different forms of ill treatment or infliction of pain can be explained as follows:

- **Torture:** Existence of a specific purpose plus intentional infliction of severe suffering or pain;
- **Cruel or inhuman treatment:** No specific purpose, significant level of suffering or pain inflicted;
- **Outrages upon personal dignity:** No specific purpose, significant level of humiliation or degradation.

“Methods of ill treatment may be both physical and/ or psychological in nature and both methods may have physical and psychological effects.”<sup>6</sup>

The 1984 United Nations Convention Against Torture defines torture in Article I as follows:

“For the purposes of this Convention, the term ‘torture’ means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/69mjxc.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cat.htm>

## The Terms: Law and Order

The process of homicide investigation and prosecution is often presented on television and in films in a simplified and streamlined way. Here are explanations of some of the terms used in the play.

### **State's attorney's office**

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office has nearly 860 Assistant State's Attorneys who prosecute felony and misdemeanor crimes in the county. The office is divided into seven bureaus: Criminal Prosecutions, Juvenile Justice, Narcotics, Special Prosecutions, Civil Actions, Investigations and Administrative Services.<sup>8</sup>

### **Public defenders**

Public defenders can be elected or appointed. They are assigned by the courts to defend individuals who cannot afford an attorney. Attorneys at larger firms are often asked to do a certain amount of free, or pro bono, work that may include public-defense cases.

### **Homicide detectives**

Homicide detectives are assigned to investigate murders. What they and their teams collect in the form of evidence, witness statements and even confessions; can be used by prosecutors to try individuals for murder.

### **Clearance rate**

In homicide units, the clearance rate refers to the number of cases that get completed—where there is sufficient evidence or, in rare cases, a confession, to prosecute a suspect—in a year. It is a point of pride to solve cases. If a unit has a low clearance rate, it might mean the officer in charge will be replaced.

### **Office of Professional Standards**

The Office of Professional Standards (now the Bureau of Professional Standards) is the office within the Chicago Police Department charged with investigating alleged violations of statutes or laws by members of the department.

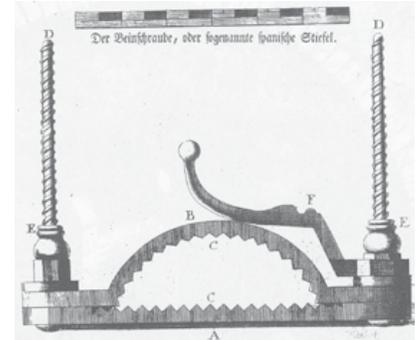
---

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.statesattorney.org/index2/about\\_the\\_office.html](http://www.statesattorney.org/index2/about_the_office.html)

## Timeline: A Selected History of Torture and Anti-Torture Legislation

**4th Century B.C.** Aristotle, in chapter 15 of Rhetoric, lists torture among the five extrinsic proofs, or evidence, that may be used in the legal process: laws, witnesses, custom, torture and oaths.<sup>9</sup>

*(At right: Diagram of a “legscrew.” With this device, a suspect’s leg is inserted in the metal vice, whose inner surfaces are scored with sharp edges.)*



**1252** Pope Innocent IV announces that heretics deserve torture.<sup>10</sup>

**1692** In Salem, Mass., 19 men and women are sentenced to death for witchcraft, and one man is pressed to death with stones for refusing to admit he is a witch.<sup>11</sup>

**1754** Prussia abandons all torture. Over the next 100 years, many European nations will follow suit and ban torture.<sup>12</sup>

**1789** The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States gives defendants the right to remain silent and not testify against themselves. The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishment.<sup>13</sup>

**1903** President Theodore Roosevelt defends the use of water torture on Filipino detainees, saying, “Nobody was seriously damaged.”<sup>14</sup>

**1931** The Wickersham Commission, also known as the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, determines that the extreme interrogation measure known as the “third degree” amounts to torture.<sup>15</sup>

*“The third degree is a secret and illegal practice. Those who employ it either will not talk or else will make formal denial of its existence. The victims are likely to exaggerate or fabricate accounts to further their ends or decline to talk because of fear of police retaliation.”<sup>16</sup> — The Wickersham Commission*

<sup>9</sup> *Torture* – Edward Peters, P 14

<sup>10</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 28

<sup>11</sup> [http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/sal\\_acct.htm](http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/sal_acct.htm)

<sup>12</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 31

<sup>13</sup> <http://civilliberty.about.com/od/lawenforcementterrorism/tp/History-of-Torture-Timeline.htm>

<sup>14</sup> <http://civilliberty.about.com/od/lawenforcementterrorism/tp/History-of-Torture-Timeline.htm>

<sup>15</sup> *Policing & Society: A Global Approach*, Palmiotto and Innithan, P 99

<sup>16</sup> *Policing & Society: A Global Approach*, Palmiotto and Innithan, P 99

**1938** Author Tennessee Williams reads an article about prisoner torture and rioting at the Philadelphia County prison and writes his play *Not About Nightingales*, about starvation, hot boxes and beatings at a prison. A hot box, also called a sweatbox, is a form of solitary confinement that subjects prisoners to high temperatures in a closed room.<sup>17</sup>

**1939-1945** During World War II, torture is pervasive in Nazi concentration camps and by the Japanese military, which starves and tortures some 20,000 American POWs in labor camps. Torture is also used by the Allies to interrogate Nazi agents.<sup>18</sup>

**1941** Delaware’s legislature bans the use of the whipping post as punishment for those who have stolen less than \$25.<sup>19</sup>

**1949** On August 12, the Geneva Conventions are adopted, prohibiting the mistreatment of prisoners of war and civilian populations during times of war.<sup>20</sup>

**1954-1962** The French Army engages in torture during the Algerian War.<sup>21</sup>

**1964-1974** American prisoners of war during the Vietnam War are subjected to torture. The so-called “Hanoi Hilton” POW camp becomes synonymous with torture.<sup>22</sup>

**1965** Prison officials at Tucker State Farm, part of the Arkansas State Penitentiary, are prohibited from using corporal punishment by the decision in *Talley v. Stephens*. The prison is infamous for its use of torture, including the “Tucker Telephone,” a hand-cranked telephone that is used to administer electric shocks to prisoners’ genitals.<sup>23</sup>

**1968** On January 21, The Washington Post runs a photograph of a U. S. soldier supervising the waterboarding of a captured Vietnamese soldier. The photo leads to an investigation and court martial of the supervising soldier.<sup>24</sup>

*“Torture is the calculated infliction of pain, but it is also an emblem of state power. To talk about torture is not just to talk about pain but to enter into a complex discourse of morality, legality and politics.”*

— Stanley Cohen, “Talking About Torture in Israel,” *Tikkun*<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.talkinbroadway.com/world/nightingales.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2009/05/13/how-torture-helped-win-wwii.html>

<sup>19</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 32

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/torture/etc/faqs.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1108014.stm>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/honor/timeline/timeline2.html>

<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment* – David Levinson, P 1641-1642

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=15886834>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.utexas.edu/law/centers/humanrights/events/speaker-series-papers/Hajjar\\_Does%20Torture%20Work.pdf](http://www.utexas.edu/law/centers/humanrights/events/speaker-series-papers/Hajjar_Does%20Torture%20Work.pdf)

**1971** In Northern Ireland, The Royal Ulster Constabulary, under the supervision of the British Army, uses “interrogation in depth” or the five techniques—hooding, wall standing, subjection to noise, deprivation of food or water, and sleep deprivation—on counterterrorism suspects.<sup>26</sup>

**1970s-1980s** Allegations of torture and coerced confessions in Area 2 of the Chicago Police Department begin emerging.

**1976-1983** The military junta’s war in Argentina becomes notorious for the disappearance and torture of citizens who are held at 400 separate torture camps.<sup>27</sup>

**1977** Spain passes an amnesty law for all crimes committed while carrying out political repression before 1976 by “authorities, civil servants and agents of public order.”

**1984** The United Nations Convention Against Torture defines torture and asks member countries to agree to legislation banning torture and preventing extradition of individuals to countries in which they are likely to be tortured.<sup>28</sup>

**1991** In January, Amnesty International issues a report calling for a full investigation of the reports of systematic torture in Area 2 of the Chicago Police Department.<sup>29</sup>

**1994** The U.N. Convention Against Torture goes into effect in the United States as law. The law bans the transfer of a prisoner to a country in which there is “substantial grounds” he may face torture.<sup>30</sup>

**1999** Amnesty international records incidents of torture or ill treatment in more than 100 countries.<sup>31</sup>

*“The difference between us and the enemy is how we treat the enemy.”*  
— Rear Admiral John Hutson, former U.S. Navy lawyer<sup>32</sup>

**2002** On December 2, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld approves “coercive interrogation techniques” for prisoners held in the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, including threatening prisoners with dogs.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/torture/justify/3.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3673470/Argentinas-dirty-war-the-museum-of-horrors.html>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/timeline/timeline\\_1.html#](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/timeline/timeline_1.html#)

<sup>29</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 226

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/timeline/timeline\\_1.html#](http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/rendition701/timeline/timeline_1.html#)

<sup>31</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 38

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/campaigns/security-with-human-rights/quotes-on-guantanamo-and-torture>

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/04/22/the\\_torture\\_timeline](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/04/22/the_torture_timeline)

**2003** On January 11, Illinois Gov. George Ryan commutes the sentences of 167 death-row prisoners. Ryan cites “error determining guilt” as one of the reasons for his blanket clemency of death row inmates, granting them life in prison without parole. He apologizes to four men who had received death sentences as a result of confessions obtained through torture.<sup>34</sup>

**2004** Photos taken by American soldiers show torture and mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners being held at Abu Ghraib prison. This is the prison Saddam Hussein made infamous for torturing prisoners when he was in power.

*“The notion that somehow the United States was wildly torturing anybody is not true. ... Three people were waterboarded. Not dozens, not hundreds. Three. ... [And] it produced phenomenal results for us. ... It was out of the enhanced interrogation techniques that some of the leads came that ultimately produced the result when President Obama was able to send in Seal Team 6 to kill Bin Laden.”*<sup>35</sup>

— Former Vice President Dick Cheney

**2004** Evidence emerges that under President Robert Mugabe, children in Zimbabwe are being abducted and taught forms of torture, such as electrocution, in government-run training camps.<sup>36</sup>

**2012** On January 24, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrests four police officers on charges of false arrest, obstruction of justice and excessive force, particularly against Hispanics, in East Haven, Conn.<sup>37</sup>

**2012** On March 30, The Investigative Committee charges four police officers in the Siberian city of Novokuznetsk with torturing detainees and the death of one prisoner from effects of torture.<sup>38</sup>

*“It is here that the utter lunacy of the entire process becomes most apparent. Torture, to be sure, is an essential feature of the whole totalitarian police and judiciary apparatus; it is used every day to make people talk. This type of torture, since it pursues a definite, rational aims, has certain limitations: either the prisoner talks within a certain time, or he is killed.”*

—Hannah Arendt, “Total Domination”<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/12/us/citing-issue-of-fairness-governor-clears-out-death-row-in-illinois.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/09/dick-cheney-defends-torture-al-qaida>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/29/world/struggle-for-iraq-treatment-prisoners-gi-s-are-accused-abusing-iraqi-captives.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/25/nyregion/connecticut-police-officers-accused-of-mistreating-latinos.html?ref=policebrutalityandmisconduct>

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/world/europe/russia-new-police-brutality-charges.html?\\_r=1&ref=policebrutalityandmisconduct](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/world/europe/russia-new-police-brutality-charges.html?_r=1&ref=policebrutalityandmisconduct)

<sup>39</sup> *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, Peter Baehr ed. P. 134

## A Timeline of the Chicago Police Torture Scandal

**1968** Jon Burge, age 20, is posted as a member of the Military Police (MP) in Vietnam. Members of his company later tell Chicago Reader staff writer John Conroy that they participated in the torture of prisoners. Three describe witnessing electric shock with alligator clips attached to a hand-cranked field phone.<sup>40</sup>

**1970** Burge, having returned from Vietnam with a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and two Army Commendations for valor for dragging wounded men back to a bunker, joins the Chicago Police Department (CPD).<sup>41</sup>

**May 1972** Burge is promoted to detective and is assigned to Chicago's Police Area 2.<sup>42</sup>

**May 1973** Burge and other detectives arrest gang leader Anthony Holmes, who later alleges that Burge handcuffed him to a chair, suffocated him with a bag and gave him electric shock. Holmes gives a lengthy confession to many crimes, and other gang members are subsequently arrested. Chicago's police superintendent later praises the officers' "skillful questioning."<sup>43</sup>

**December 1, 1980** Richard M. Daley is sworn in as Cook County State's Attorney.

**October 1981** Burge assigned as commanding officer of the Area 2 violent crimes unit.<sup>44</sup>

**February 5, 1982** Area 2 detectives, led by Burge, interrogate Melvin Jones, who later alleges that he was tortured with electric shock and that a gun was pointed at his head.<sup>45</sup>

**February 9, 1982** Gang Crimes officers William Fahey and Richard O'Brien stop a car driven by Jackie Wilson. Jackie's brother Andrew shoots both officers dead. A manhunt ensues and many black men are taken into custody. Accusations of police brutality are widespread.<sup>46</sup>

**February 14, 1982** Andrew and Jackie Wilson are apprehended by Chicago police. Both confess to the crime, but neither confession, taken by a supervisor in the state's attorney's office, contains the standard question asking if the statement is being given voluntarily, without coercion. It is an extraordinary omission and a red flag on the case in the state's attorney's office.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921098>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921098>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921098>

<sup>43</sup> Goldston Report, P 18

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921098>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/house-of-screams/Content?oid=875107>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/house-of-screams/Content?oid=875107>

**February 16 – 17, 1982** Andrew Wilson tells his public defenders that he was burned against a radiator, suffocated with a plastic bag, and given electric shock with two different devices. His attorneys have photos taken of his injuries, which include parallel burns on his chest, a jagged burn on his leg, and puncture marks on his ears and nose in the shape of alligator clips.<sup>48</sup>

**February 16, 1982** After examining Andrew Wilson, Dr. John Raba, Medical Director of Cermak Health Services, sends a letter to Richard Brzeczek, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department, urging him to investigate the cause of Wilson’s injuries.<sup>49</sup>

**February 25, 1982** Brzeczek sends Raba’s letter to State’s Attorney Richard M. Daley. Daley does not respond and later gives approval for prosecutors to ask for the death penalty for Wilson.<sup>50</sup>

**April 29, 1983** Harold Washington becomes the first black mayor of Chicago.<sup>51</sup>

**October 28, 1983** Gregory Banks is interrogated by detectives at Area 2. In a later hearing on a motion to suppress his confession, he alleges that a gun was put in his mouth, that he was beaten with a flashlight and suffocated with a plastic bag twice. Detectives claim his injuries came when he attempted to escape and had to be wrestled down some stairs.<sup>52</sup>

**November 2, 1983** Darrell Cannon is taken into custody and later alleges that Area 2 detectives took him to a remote area, put a cattle prod to his genitals, and subjected him to having a shotgun placed in his mouth.<sup>53</sup>

*“The officer with the electric cattle prod was sticking it to my penis and testicles while my pants and shorts were pull down around my ankles, and he kept his feet on top of mine so I wouldn’t be able to kick my legs up as I was being electric-shocked.”*

— Affidavit of Darrell Cannon in *People v. Darrell Cannon*

**February 9, 1984** Defense attorney Earl Washington is quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times* accusing police of giving electric shock to his two clients: “Use of the black box is growing and the target is the genitals.” Both papers treat it as a one-day story.<sup>54</sup>

**June 7, 1984** Philip Adkins, a participant in an armed robbery, is

---

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/house-of-screams/Content?oid=875107>

<sup>49</sup> [http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston\\_Sanders\\_Report\\_OPS\\_Burge\\_.pdf](http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston_Sanders_Report_OPS_Burge_.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> [http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston\\_Sanders\\_Report\\_OPS\\_Burge\\_.pdf](http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston_Sanders_Report_OPS_Burge_.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> <http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/april-29-1983-chicagos-black-mayor-9317317>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>53</sup> Affidavit of Defendant Darrell Cannon in *People v. Darrell Cannon* 88-11830

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/deaf-to-the-screams/Content?oid=912813>

apprehended by Area 2 detectives. He later alleges in an OPS complaint and civil lawsuit that detectives took him to a railroad viaduct, where they beat him with flashlights and nightsticks. The city denies wrongdoing, but settles Adkins' civil suit out of court for \$25,000.<sup>55</sup>

**November 3, 1984** Stanley Howard confesses to murder after 43 hours in police custody. Taken to the hospital both before and after his interrogation, he is found to have sustained new injuries in the interval. He alleges that Area 2 detectives beat him and suffocated him with a typewriter cover. In 1991, the Illinois Supreme Court upholds his death sentence for murder, ruling that the evidence against him is “overwhelming.”<sup>56</sup>

**July 29, 1985** Three years after Andrew Wilson's arrest, CPD's Office of Professional Standards (OPS), having conducted a minimal investigation, closes the case, saying that the allegations of abuse are “not sustained.”<sup>57</sup>

**April 30, 1986** Aaron Patterson is arrested in connection with a double homicide. He alleges that while being interrogated at Area 2, detectives suffocated him twice with a typewriter cover. He confesses and is later sentenced to death.<sup>58</sup>

**August, 1986** Burge is promoted to Commander and transferred to the Bomb and Arson unit.<sup>59</sup>

**1987** Andrew Wilson, serving a death sentence, is granted a new trial by the Illinois Supreme Court after judges rule that the state did not show that his confession had been given voluntarily. At his second trial, Wilson is convicted without the confession as evidence and is given a life sentence. He dies on November 19, 2007.<sup>60</sup>

**January 6, 1987** A fire in an apartment building kills seven people. Police interrogate Madison Hobley, the father and husband of two of those killed in the fire, who alleges he was denied a lawyer and was strangled, beaten, and suffocated with a typewriter cover. He is convicted of arson murder and sentenced to death.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>57</sup> [http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston\\_Sanders\\_Report OPS\\_Burge\\_.pdf](http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston_Sanders_Report OPS_Burge_.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921098>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-persistence-of-andrew-wilson/Content?oid=999832>

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

**1988** Burge is transferred to command detectives at Area 3. Accusations of torture and brutality committed by detectives under his command follow, including the torture of a juvenile.

**May 2, 1988** Darrell Cannon, who'd been arrested in 1983 and later claimed he'd been shocked in the genitals with a cattleprod, receives a settlement of \$3,000 in his civil suit against the police. His attorney is unaware of any other allegations of torture at Area 2. Cannon will ultimately serve 24 years in prison before he is released.<sup>62</sup>

**February 1989** Anonymous letters, sent in CPD envelopes, begin to arrive at the People's Law Office (PLO), which is representing Andrew Wilson in a civil suit against the city. The never-identified writer has inside knowledge of Area 2 and lists the names of the detectives who are "Burge's asskickers." One letter leads the PLO to another electric shock victim, who in turn mentions others.<sup>63</sup>

**March 1989** *Chicago Lawyer* publishes a lengthy article on the evidence supporting Andrew Wilson's claims of torture.

**April 24, 1989** Richard M. Daley leaves office as Cook County State's Attorney and is sworn in as mayor of Chicago. More than 50 men have alleged that they were tortured during Daley's eight years as State's Attorney.<sup>64</sup>

**August 1989** Citizen's Alert, a police accountability group, puts together a coalition of community groups to put pressure on the CPD to respond to charges of torture at Area 2.<sup>65</sup>

**January 25, 1990** John Conroy, staff writer for the *Chicago Reader*, writes "House of Screams," his first article drawing attention to the torture allegations, reporting on the existence of the anonymous letters and the pattern of torture at Area 2. Over the course of the next 17 years, Conroy writes 22 articles in the *Reader* covering the scandal.<sup>66</sup>

**March 27, 1990** Office of Professional Standards (OPS) investigators Francine Sanders and Michael Goldston are assigned to re-investigate allegations of abuse in response to Conroy's "House of Screams" article. Months later, Sanders' report concludes that Wilson had indeed been tortured with electric shock. Goldston reports that the abuse was "systematic," that it included "planned torture," and that command members knew about it. The city declines to release the reports, and they are suppressed until a federal court judge orders their release in 1992.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>63</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/3527606-423/burge-police-taylor-case-torture.html?print=true>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/mayors/rm\\_daley\\_inaug01.php](http://www.chipublib.org/cplbooksmovies/cplarchive/mayors/rm_daley_inaug01.php)

<sup>65</sup> <http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/chicagotorture/timeline.shtml>

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/house-of-screams/Content?oid=875107>

<sup>67</sup> [http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston\\_Sanders\\_Report OPS\\_Burge.pdf](http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston_Sanders_Report OPS_Burge.pdf)

*“In the matter of alleged physical abuse, the preponderance of evidence is that it did occur and that it was systematic. The time span involved covers more than ten years. The type of abuse described was not limited to the usual beatings, but went into such esoteric areas as psychological techniques and planned torture.”* — Goldston Report, September 28, 1990<sup>68</sup>

**1990-1996** Jack O’Malley serves as Cook County State’s Attorney. Despite the city’s admission that torture occurred and the mounting evidence in support of the allegations, O’Malley does not investigate if men on death row are there on the basis of confessions obtained by torture or because of perjury committed by police officers.<sup>69</sup>

**January 1991** Amnesty International issues a report calling for a full investigation of reports of systematic torture in Area 2 of the CPD.<sup>70</sup>

**November 1991** Jon Burge, John Yucaitis and Patrick O’Hara are suspended, the result of Francine Sanders’ OPS report concluding that Burge and Yucaitis had tortured Andrew Wilson and that O’Hara had known about it but had not intervened.<sup>71</sup>

**February 27, 1992** In the *Chicago Tribune*, columnist Mike Royko argues that “sign-waving protesters” asking for Burge’s dismissal should “get a life.”<sup>72</sup>

*“There have been two trials in federal court as a result of lawsuits brought by Wilson. Both accused several cops of torturing him. He lost both suits. You might think that would be the end of it. The Wilson brothers are in prison, where they should remain the rest of their worthless lives. ... I don’t doubt that someone abused Andrew Wilson after he was arrested. But we don’t know who did it, and we’ll never know. It could have been the three facing dismissal. It could have been others. Since the city doesn’t know, it should let it go. ... As for those sign-waving protesters who are seeking the hides of the three cops, one two-part question: Have you ever had any firsthand experience with them, and did they ever torture you? If not, get a life.”* — Mike Royko, “Facts Don’t Add Up To Police Brutality,” *Chicago Tribune*<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> [http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston\\_Sanders\\_Report OPS\\_Burge.pdf](http://chicagojustice.org/foi/relevant-documents-of-interest/goldston-sanders-ops-investigative-report-on-burge/Goldston_Sanders_Report OPS_Burge.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921960>

<sup>70</sup> *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy, P 226

<sup>71</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-02-11/news/9303177820\\_1\\_wilson-case-police-board-jon-burge](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-02-11/news/9303177820_1_wilson-case-police-board-jon-burge)

<sup>72</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-02-27/news/9201180750\\_1\\_cops-torturing-andrew-wilson](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-02-27/news/9201180750_1_cops-torturing-andrew-wilson)

<sup>73</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-02-27/news/9201180750\\_1\\_cops-torturing-andrew-wilson](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-02-27/news/9201180750_1_cops-torturing-andrew-wilson)

**February 10, 1993** The Chicago Police Board fires Burge and reinstates Detectives Yucaitis and O’Hara. The Board’s lengthy report never mentions the word torture, nor does it spell out precisely what Burge did. In front-page stories, the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times* report that Burge has been fired as a result of charges of torture.<sup>74</sup>

**August 1993** The city of Chicago agrees to pay \$92,500 to settle a civil suit by Gregory Banks alleging torture by Area 2 detectives.<sup>75</sup>

**1994** The City of Chicago’s Law Department admits that Andrew Wilson and Melvin Jones were tortured at Area 2.<sup>76</sup>

**December 1996** Richard Devine becomes State’s Attorney. Like his predecessor, he declines to reopen the torture cases.<sup>77</sup>

**January, 1999** The *Chicago Tribune* runs a five-article series on prosecutorial misconduct.<sup>78</sup>

**November 1999** The *Chicago Tribune* publishes a pivotal five part series on the death penalty in Illinois, with one article devoted to the evidence of torture at Area 2.<sup>79</sup>

**January 10, 2003** At DePaul University Law School, Illinois Governor George Ryan announces that he is pardoning four men tortured at Area 2, all of whom had been sentenced to death: Madison Hobley, Stanley Howard, Aaron Patterson, and Leroy Orange. He says the four were both innocent and tortured. Cook County State’s Attorney Richard Devine denounces the four as “evil.”<sup>80</sup>

*“How many innocent people were sitting on death row facing death? That was my concern and the reason I did what I did. I didn’t want to see any innocent people electrocuted. ... The system has failed for all four men,” he said. “And it has failed the people of this state.”* — Governor George Ryan, announcing the pardons of four men whom he believed had been tortured into confessing to murders they had not committed, January 10, 2003<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-02-11/news/9303177820\\_1\\_wilson-case-police-board-jon-burge](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-02-11/news/9303177820_1_wilson-case-police-board-jon-burge)

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/town-without-pity-police-torture/Content?oid=889464>

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-shocking-truth/Content?oid=892462>

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-police-torture-scandal-a-whos-who/Content?oid=1921960>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/gyrobase/revisiting-john-conroys-journalistic-odyssey-into-police-torture/Content?oid=4799824&storyPage=2>

<sup>79</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1999-11-14/news/chi-991114deathillinois1\\_1\\_capital-punishment-death-row-criminal-justice-system](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1999-11-14/news/chi-991114deathillinois1_1_capital-punishment-death-row-criminal-justice-system)

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/11/us/4-death-row-inmates-are-pardoned.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.stopcapitalpunishment.org/coverage/50.html>

**January 11, 2003** Governor Ryan commutes the sentences of 167 death penalty prisoners, citing the number of men sentenced to death for crimes they had not committed. Northwestern University’s Center on Wrongful Convictions, founded in 1998, is key in providing the evidence that results in Ryan’s action. To date, 34 innocent men and women have been exonerated as a result of the Center’s efforts and the Center has assisted with 14 additional exonerations.<sup>82</sup>

*“How many innocent people were sitting on death row facing death? That was my concern and the reason I did what I did. I didn’t want to see any innocent people electrocuted”*

— Illinois Governor George Ryan<sup>83</sup>

**November 2, 2004** In a sworn statement given to PLO attorney Flint Taylor, Walter Young, a black police officer who served as a detective under Burge at Area 2, says that although he didn’t know precisely what was being done to suspects, he heard it referred to as the “Vietnam special” or the “Vietnamese treatment.”<sup>84</sup>

**July 2005** A new Illinois law, sponsored by State Senator Barack Obama, goes into effect requiring police to electronically record interrogations in homicide cases.<sup>85</sup>

**July 19, 2006** After a four-year investigation and \$7 million in taxpayer dollars, Special Prosecutors Edward J. Egan and Robert D. Boyle release a report that concludes that no one can be indicted for the abuse of suspects at Areas 2 and 3.<sup>86</sup>

**January 2008** The city of Chicago agrees to pay \$19.8 million to settle the civil suits of the four men pardoned by Governor Ryan.<sup>87</sup>

**October 21, 2008** U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald indicts Burge. Because the statute of limitations has passed on all acts of physical abuse, Fitzgerald can only charge Burge with perjury and obstruction of justice, charges based on less than 60 words in his written responses to interrogatories filed in Madison Hobbey’s civil suit.<sup>88</sup>

**July 7, 2009** Ronald Kitchen and Marvin Reeves, arrested by Burge’s detectives in 1988 and convicted of a quintuple homicide, are freed after prosecutors dismiss the charges against them. In a pending civil suit, Kitchen alleges he was tortured into confessing and implicating Reeves.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/12/us/citing-issue-of-fairness-governor-clears-out-death-row-in-illinois.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.stopcapitalpunishment.org/coverage/50.html>

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/tools-of-torture/Content?oid=917876>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.illinois.gov/PressReleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?RecNum=2188&SubjectID=5>

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.law.northwestern.edu/macarthur/documents/police/4\\_25\\_07FinalSpecPros.pdf](http://www.law.northwestern.edu/macarthur/documents/police/4_25_07FinalSpecPros.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> [http://bostonherald.com/news/regional/view/Chicago\\_agrees\\_to\\_pay\\_20M\\_to\\_settle\\_torture\\_cases](http://bostonherald.com/news/regional/view/Chicago_agrees_to_pay_20M_to_settle_torture_cases)

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/cwc/issues/causesandremedies/PoliceMisconduct/Torture/PressRelease.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2009-08-20/news/0908190844\\_1\\_new-trial-prison-informant](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2009-08-20/news/0908190844_1_new-trial-prison-informant)

**January 14, 2010** Michael Tillman, serving a life sentence, is released from prison after serving 23 years for a murder and rape he had not committed. He is exonerated one month later. In a pending civil suit, he alleges that he confessed to the crimes after being tortured by detectives who had served under Burge.<sup>90</sup>

**May 26, 2010** Burge's trial begins in federal court. Witnesses against him include Anthony Holmes, tortured by electric shock in 1973, and Melvin Jones, tortured in 1982. The photos of Andrew Wilson's radiator burns and the puncture marks left by alligator clips on his ears and nose are also introduced as evidence. During the trial, a former Area 2 detective testifies that he saw Burge put a piece of plastic over a suspect's face.<sup>91</sup>

**June 28, 2010** A jury finds Burge guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice.<sup>92</sup>

**January 21, 2011** Judge Joan Lefkow sentences Jon Burge to 4 ½ years in prison.<sup>93</sup>

*“Now when I hear your attorney implying that if someone did the crime, no harm, no foul, they deserved it, I am frankly shocked. Even if counsel only means to say that none of these people can be believed because they are criminals, the mountain of evidence to the contrary completely belies that position. ...*

*“You denied any knowledge of torture of the plaintiff or of any other torture or abuse having occurred under your direction or command. You denied it in answers to the interrogatories, and you maintained that denial under oath in this courtroom where you testified in your own defense. Unfortunately for you the jury did not believe you, and I must agree that I did not either.”*

— Judge Lefkow addressing Jon Burge at his sentencing<sup>94</sup>

**January 27, 2011** Chicago's Police Pension board rules Burge can continue to receive his \$3,000 per month pension, stating that the acts of perjury and obstruction of justice underlying Burge's conviction had nothing to do with his conduct as a police officer.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Tillman-goes-free-81511792.html>

<sup>91</sup> [http://blogs.suntimes.com/marin/2010/05/jon\\_burge\\_the\\_trial\\_begins.html](http://blogs.suntimes.com/marin/2010/05/jon_burge_the_trial_begins.html)

<sup>92</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-06-28/news/ct-met-burge-trial-0629-20100628\\_1\\_burge-chicago-police-cmdr-special-cook-county-prosecutors](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2010-06-28/news/ct-met-burge-trial-0629-20100628_1_burge-chicago-police-cmdr-special-cook-county-prosecutors)

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/3527606-423/burge-police-taylor-case-torture.html?print=true>

<sup>94</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/3527606-423/burge-police-taylor-case-torture.html?print=true>

<sup>95</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/27/jon-burge-pension-police-\\_n\\_814894.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/01/27/jon-burge-pension-police-_n_814894.html)

**March 16, 2011** Eric Caine, serving a life sentence for a double murder, is ordered released from prison after serving 25 years when a judge dismisses his conviction. In a pending civil suit, he alleges that he confessed to the crime after having his eardrum ruptured by detectives at Area 2.<sup>96</sup>

On the same day — 38 years after the first known incident of torture — Burge reports to federal prison.

**January 18, 2012** The Chicago City Council unanimously passes a resolution against torture.<sup>97</sup>

**March 27, 2012** After months of delay, Flint Taylor of the PLO files a motion to compel Richard M. Daley to sit for a deposition about his time as State's Attorney, the period when torture escalated at Area 2.<sup>98</sup>

**April 10, 2012** Daley agrees to be questioned under oath by lawyers suing the city of Chicago over allegations of police torture.<sup>99</sup>

**May 2012** The city of Chicago has now paid more than \$37 million in civil suits alleging torture committed by Burge and detectives under his command. That amount is likely to escalate as ongoing civil suits by other victims, who spent decades in prison for crimes they did not commit, are settled or go to trial. Burge is the sole CPD officer to have been charged in connection to the allegations.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/metro/3425666-418/burge-police-person-federal-accused.html>

<sup>97</sup> [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-01-25/news/ct-oped-0125-torture-20120125\\_1\\_torture-chicago-police-cmdr-solitary-confinement](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-01-25/news/ct-oped-0125-torture-20120125_1_torture-chicago-police-cmdr-solitary-confinement)  
<http://illinoiscat.wordpress.com/>

<sup>98</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/marin/11559926-452/daley-cant-duck-torture-questions.html>

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.suntimes.com/news/crime/11817405-418/daley-agrees-to-be-questioned-under-oath-about-burge.html>

<http://www.myfoxchicago.com/dpp/news/metro/mayor-richard-daley-agrees-questioned-under-oath-about-jon-burge-torture-case-20120410>

<sup>100</sup> <http://news.yahoo.com/police-torture-cases-daley-era-vex-chicagos-rahm-184000470.html>

## Chicago: My Kind of Town

Chicago has long been a city with a complicated reputation. It is the city of nicknames: the city of the big shoulders, city in a garden, windy city, and the second city. It is also a city that prompts a great deal of pride and affection from the residents, and strong responses from visitors as the following excerpts suggest.

\* \* \* \*

### CHICAGO

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I  
have seen your painted women under the gas lamps  
luring the farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it  
is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to  
kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the  
faces of women and children I have seen the marks  
of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who  
sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer  
and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing  
so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.  
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on  
job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the  
little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning  
as a savage pitted against the wilderness,  
Bareheaded,  
Shoveling,  
Wrecking,  
Planning,  
Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with  
white teeth,  
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young  
man laughs,  
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has  
never lost a battle,  
Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse.  
and under his ribs the heart of the people,  
Laughing!  
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of  
Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog  
Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with  
Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.  
— Carl Sandburg, 1916

\* \* \* \*

*“Chicago is not the most corrupt American city; it is the most  
theatrically corrupt.”*  
— Studs Terkel on *The Dick Cavett Show*, June 9, 1978

\* \* \* \*

*“You can live your whole life out somewhere between Goose  
Island and Bronzeville without once feeling that, the week after  
you move, the neighbors are going to miss your place. For it isn’t  
so much a city as a vasty way station where three and a half  
million bipeds swarm with the single cry, ‘One side or a leg off,  
I’m gettin’ mine!’ Its every man for himself in this hired air.  
Yet once you’ve come to be part of this particular patch, you’ll  
never love another. Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you  
may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real.”*  
— Nelson Algren, *Chicago: City on the Make*

\* \* \* \*

*“I give you Chicago. It is not London and Harvard. It is not  
Paris and buttermilk. It is American in every chitling and  
sparerib. It is alive from snout to tail.”* —H. L. Mencken

\* \* \* \*

*“It used to be a writer’s town and it’s always been a fighter’s town. For writers and fighters and furtive torpedoes, cat-bandits, baggage thieves, hallway head lockers on the prowl, baby photographers and stylish coneroos, this is the spot that is always most convenient, being so centrally located, for settling ancestral grudges. Whether the power is in a .38, a typewriter ribbon or a pair of six-ouncers, the place has grown great on bone-deep grudges: of writers and fighters and torpedoes.”*

— Nelson Algren, *Chicago: City on the Make*

\* \* \* \*

*“I have struck a city— a real city—and they call it Chicago. ... I urgently desire never to see it again. It is inhabited by savages.”*  
— Rudyard Kipling, 1891

\* \* \* \*

*“Chicago is a city of contradictions, of private visions haphazardly overlaid and linked together.”* —Pat Colander

\* \* \* \*

*“In the campaign for a better Chicago, we’re all allies”*  
— Richard M. Daley, 1989

## The Organizations

Many organizations, lawyers, reporters and families have been involved in bringing allegations of police torture into the public sphere. These are profiles of just a few of the notable organizations.

*“In what have become known as the Chicago Police Torture cases, Burge and white detectives working under his command tortured over 110 African American men and women at Chicago police headquarters from 1972 to 1991.”*<sup>101</sup>

— Joey Mogul, Attorney with the People’s Law Office

---

<sup>101</sup> <http://chicagotorture.org/history/>

### **The People's Law Office**

The People's Law Office is the firm that represents many of the alleged victims of police abuse at Area 2. Attorneys involved in police torture litigation include: G. Flint Taylor, John Stainthorp, Jeffrey Haas and Joe Mogul.<sup>102</sup>

### **Northwestern University**

#### **Bluhm Legal Clinic's Center on Wrongful Conviction**

The Bluhm Legal Clinic was founded in 1998. 34 innocent men and women have been exonerated as a result of the center's efforts. The center has assisted in 14 additional exonerations and was key in providing the evidence that resulted in then Illinois Governor George Ryan's decision to commute all death penalty sentences in January 2003.<sup>103</sup>

#### **Northwestern University MacArthur Justice Center**

The Roderick MacArthur Justice Center (the Justice Center) has been called "a law firm like no other" by the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*. They are a nonprofit public-interest law firm at Northwestern University School of Law that litigates issues of significance for the criminal justice system, including prisoner rights, the death penalty, and gun control.

The Justice Center spends more than \$400,000 annually to provide free legal representation on criminal justice issues affecting the indigent. Since its founding in 1985, many of the Justice Center's cases have been prominently featured in the media, including *Talk* magazine, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

The Justice Center is funded by the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation of Niles, Illinois. The center, formerly affiliated with the University of Chicago, joined Northwestern Law's Bluhm Legal Clinic in 2006. Currently, 16 law students receive academic credit for assisting the center in preparing cases. Center director Locke Bowman and assistant director Joe Margulies are clinical associate professors at the Law School. David J. Bradford is founding attorney of the MacArthur Justice Center.<sup>104</sup>

### **Citizen's Alert**

Citizen's Alert is a police accountability organization, which advocates for victims of excessive force or police misconduct. In 1989, they put together a coalition of community organizations to draw attention to the allegations of police torture and put pressure on government organizations to investigate the allegations.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> <http://www.peopleslawoffice.com/>

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/wrongfulconvictions/aboutus/>

<sup>104</sup> <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/macarthur/about/>

<sup>105</sup> <http://citizensalert.org/>

## Discussion Questions

### About the Play

1. Playwright John Conroy made new characters for the play, characters that have much in common with various police detectives and torture victims but do not have the same biographies. What is the benefit in creating a fictional story about police torture rather than attempting to make a play into a documentary? Can a play ever be a documentary?
2. The play has many characters that conceal or withhold information about torture. Where do you think responsibility for torture or its cover up lies in the play? Are any characters innocent?

### About the Production

1. Characters often share the same space on stage and shift fluidly back and forth in time. What effect does it have to see the Breen family and the Jeffries family at the same table on the morning of the hearing? How does it help us understand a character like Dawson when we see him interact with all the other characters simultaneously?
2. The music for the production was composed and played by sound designer and composer Mikhail Fiskel. What is the effect of the jazz sounds underneath some of the action? Is there something about the music that is tied to a sense of Chicago identity?

### About the Context

1. Most people prefer to think about torture as something that other people do in other times and places. What does the Chicago Police torture scandal say about our city and our nation? What does it say about us as residents of the city in which this happened?
2. Only Commander Jon Burge has received jail time related to the allegations of torture (he was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice). Why do you think no other police detectives, or attorneys from the state's attorney's office, have ever been prosecuted?

## References and Additional Resources

### Books

- *On Violence* – Hannah Arendt
- *Unspeakable Acts, Ordinary People* – John Conroy
- *Homicide* – David Simon
- *Policing & Society: A Global Approach* – Michael Palmiotto and Prabha Innithan
- *Torture and Democracy* – Darius Rejal
- *Chicago City on the Make* – Nelson Algren

### Articles

- John Conroy's Articles in the *Chicago Reader*  
<http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/police-torture-in-chicago-jon-burge-scandal-articles-by-john-conroy/Content?oid=1210030&/>

### Websites

- Map of Current Police Precincts  
[http://gis.chicagopolice.org/pdfs/district\\_beat.pdf](http://gis.chicagopolice.org/pdfs/district_beat.pdf)
- Chicago Police Department Organizational Structure  
<https://portal.chicagopolice.org/portal/page/portal/ClearPath/About%20CPD/CPD%20Organization/OrgChartAug2011.pdf>
- Block by block Crime Data  
<http://chicago.everyblock.com/locations/neighborhoods/hyde-park/?only=crime>
- Chicago Police Crime Summary Map  
[http://gis.chicagopolice.org/CLEARMap\\_crime\\_sums/startPage.htm#](http://gis.chicagopolice.org/CLEARMap_crime_sums/startPage.htm#)
- Timeline of the Police Torture Scandal Prepared by University of Chicago Human Rights Students  
<http://humanrights.uchicago.edu/chicagotorture/timeline.shtml>
- Details of 14 Illinois death sentences that relied on confessions that were allegedly extracted by torture compiled by Rob Warden, executive Director of the Center on Wrongful convictions  
<http://www.law.northwestern.edu/cwc/issues/causesandremedies/Police misconduct/Illinoiscases.html>