Between 1972 and 1991, over 100 African-American men and women were tortured in Chicago by police detectives under the direction of Police Commander Jon Burge at Area 2 and 3 Police Headquarters on Chicago's South Side. The torture included electric shock, sexual abuse, suffocation and beatings. Those tortured were also subjected to racial epithets and death threats. Coerced confessions resulted in scores of convictions and long prison terms and 11 sentences of death. Many of the survivors have since been exonerated and released and all those sentenced to death have either been freed or removed from death row. Today, over 20 known survivors of this police torture remain incarcerated. In 2010, 30 years after the first reported acts of brutality, Burge was convicted of perjury and obstruction of justice for denying the torture he and others committed. He was sentenced to four and a half years in prison. Except for this single federal conviction, no other Chicago police officer, state's attorney or city official has been held accountable or apologized.

Monuments to state-sanctioned crimes, abuses of power, and systemic injustices are rare, particularly in the United States. But there are times when nations or communities find it right to recall, mourn and honor those who have been victimized. The Chicago Torture Justice Memorials Project continues a decade long struggle to bring this torture to light. Each proposal in its own way will memorialize the decades of police torture and its consequences. We hope that collectively these proposals will encourage action and begin a process of revival and renewal. Our goal is to build a social movement strong enough to deter all acts of torture and to begin a process of transformative justice.

Chicago Torture Justice Memorials Project formed to honor the survivors of torture, their family members and the African-American communities affected by the torture. We seek proposal submissions that reckon with police torture in Chicago and join the struggle for justice. Proposals can take any form: collages, posters, songs, maps, narratives, poems, quilt designs, billboards, videos, performances, sculptures, banners, parades or cultural interventions of any kind. All proposals will be exhibited in community and cultural centers throughout Chicagoland and at www.chicagotorture.org.

Here are several proposals for a Justice Memorial. We ask that you contribute your own.

We invite artists and those who seek justice of all kinds to submit proposals for a monument to memorialize the Chicago Police torture cases.
Andrew Wilson.
and physically abusing
charges of torturing
for 15 months on
Detective John Yucaitis
and suspended
The Chicago Police
Feb. 11, 1993
and fire Burge.
Mayor Daley and the Superintendent
and at City Hall, challenging then
courthouse, at Police Headquarters
1980s
The Citizen’s Alert, the Task Force to
Confront Police Violence and 50
other organizations routinely
demonstrated outside the federal
courthouse, at Police Headquarters
and at City Hall, challenging then
Mayor Daley and the Superintendent
of the CPD to investigate the torture
and fire Burge.

May 1990
Office Professional Standards
completed its investigation and
cites 50 cases of torture and
abuse at Area 2 under Burge
and finds that this abuse was
"systematic", "methodological"
and "included psychological
techniques and planned
 torture."

Nov. 2, 1990
Amnesty International
issued a report calling for
an inquiry into allegations
of torture in Chicago. Then Mayor
Daley responds with "no
comment whatsoever."

Jan. 28, 1991
An inquiry into allegations
of torture in Chicago. Then Mayor
Daley responds with "no
comment whatsoever."

Jan 1992
During proceedings before the
Police Board, City lawyers admitted
that the evidence of Area 2 torture
established "an astounding pattern
or plan...to torture certain
suspects...into confessing to
crimes."

May 2006
The United Nations Committee Against
Torture found that the U.S. government
had violated the torture
convention and called on
them to "bring the
perpetrators to justice."

Oct. 2008
Jon Burge was convicted
in federal court for perjury
and obstruction of justice
based on the fact that he
lied under oath in a civil
case when he denied he
and others committed acts
of torture.

2011- present
Twenty African-American men remain
in prison as a result of convictions based in
whole or in part upon their coerced
confessions. The vast majority of torture
survivors have received no financial
compensation or psychological
counseling or for their suffering.

TESTIMONY of
Darrell Cannon
"Three white detectives saying 'N---**'
you're gonna tell me what I want to
hear.' And when I mumble the words
'no,' one of them would say 'blow that
N---**'s head off.' And they pulled the
trigger of their shotgun. Now the third
time they did that, to show you how
the human mind works, the third time
they did that, the hair on the back of
my head stood straight up, as if they
had just blown my brains out. But
again, faith got me through it."

TESTIMONY of
Anthony Holmes
"He tried to kill me. It leaves a
gnawing, hurting feeling. I can't
ever shake it...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."

TESTIMONY of
David Bates
"After the third [torture] session I basically, remember being scared to
deat and I remember not ever feeling that way before, and I never want
to feel that way again. And I wanted to find a way to protect myself from
it happening again...I also remember being in the station for a while; I
don't know how long. I remember being hungry. I remember being an
18-year-old wanting his momma. I remember not wanting to deal with
those detectives who tortured me for those sessions."