

Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center

LEGAL DIRECTOR AND
CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF LAW
Locke E. Bowman
312.503.0844
l-bowman@law.northwestern.edu

CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF LAW
Joseph Margulies
312.503.0890
j-margulies@law.northwestern.edu

CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW
Sheila A. Bedi
312.503.2492
sheila.bedi@law.northwestern.edu

CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LAW
David M. Shapiro
312.503.0711
david.shapiro@law.northwestern.edu

CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LAW
Alexa Van Brunt
312.503.1336
a-vanbrunt@law.northwestern.edu

GENERAL COUNSEL
David J. Bradford
312.222.9350
dbradford@jenner.com

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CONTACT: Jim Bray
217-494-5532 (cell)

Locke Bowman
773-710-0158

G. Flint Taylor
773-616-3736

Finance Committee Approves \$12.3 Million Settlement With Police Torture Victims Ronald Kitchen and Marvin Reeves

CHICAGO – The Finance Committee of the City of Chicago on Friday approved payment of a \$12.3 million settlement to be divided between Ronald Kitchen, a former Death Row prisoner who spent 21 years behind bars, and his co-defendant Marvin Reeves.

The criminal convictions of Kitchen and Reeves were overturned in 2009 with the agreement of Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, and the men later received certificates of innocence from the Cook County Courts. Kitchen was convicted based on his false confession extracted through torture by former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge, detective Michael Kill and two other detectives, and the false testimony of a jailhouse snitch.

Kitchen's lawsuit, filed in 2010, alleged that he was arrested on a false tip, deprived of food and sleep and repeatedly tortured by Burge and Kill and their associates who beat him with their fists, a nightstick and a telephone, inflicting serious injury to his genitals.

During discovery in the lawsuit, Kitchen subpoenaed former Mayor Richard M. Daley, who, while State's Attorney, had approved the seeking of the death penalty in Kitchen's case, to testify about his knowledge of the torture scandal. Daley refused to appear, and a motion to compel his testimony was pending before the court at the time the settlement was reached this summer.

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The Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center and the People's Law Office represented Kitchen in the lawsuit and negotiated the settlement with the City of Chicago, The portion of the lawsuit naming the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and Assistant State's Attorney Mark Lukanich as defendants has not been settled and is still pending.

"More than 100 African American men were victims of torture, wrongful prosecution and false imprisonment in Cook County between 1973 and 1991," said Locke Bowman, Director of the MacArthur Justice Center. "The abusive police actions spanning more than two decades were made possible by other authority figures, who helped keep the torture secret, thwarted attempts to discipline rogue police officers, and refused to act on calls for investigations and prosecutions of Burge and others responsible for the systemic pattern of torture. Ronald Kitchen was tortured and spent much of his life in prison because so many of the people we entrusted to uphold justice opted instead to destroy it."

"We regret that former Mayor Richard M. Daley will once again escape testifying about his involvement in the Burge torture scandal," said G. Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office. "We hope that he will be compelled to do so in several other cases that are pending in the state and federal courts. We also call on Mayor Emanuel to apologize to the survivors of police torture and to the African American community for the damage done by the Burge torture scandal and to create a fund, in an amount equal to the \$20,000,000 paid in 'pinstripe patronage' to the lawyers who have defended Burge, Daley, and their confederates, to compensate those torture survivors who have been prevented from bringing lawsuits by the City's decades long coverup."

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