

Gitmo in Chicago

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What [London's Guardian](#) reported on Tuesday is shocking, disturbing, yet unsurprising given the scourge of neocon fascist governance in America.

Washington's war on humanity at home and abroad should be a wakeup call for everyone. Wars without end rage against one nation after another.

Independent ones are targeted for regime change. Washington's goal is total colonization of planet earth, stealing its resources and enslaving its people.

US cities are virtual battlegrounds like never before. America is unsafe to live in.

Washington provides police nationwide with enormous amounts of combat weapons, related equipment and supplies – making them virtual military units.

The line between cop and combat ready soldier is less clear than ever in US history. Militarized police wage war on freedom. It's a hair's breadth from disappearing altogether.

When cities become battlegrounds, ordinary people risk being treated like enemies – losing all constitutional protections mattering most.

The alarming state of today's America should scare everyone. Fundamental rights don't matter. Anyone can be targeted, arrested and disappeared. Perhaps never heard from again.

This writer's home city Chicago may be ground zero for some of the most disturbing practices. London's Guardian broke the story demanding world coverage and outrage.

On February 24, it [headlined](#) "The disappeared: Chicago police detain Americans at abuse-laden 'black site.' "

It's an "off-the-books (Homan Square) interrogation compound," said the Guardian – some miles west from where this writer lives.

A "nondescript warehouse (is) the domestic equivalent of a CIA black site." People are lawlessly arrested, detained, denied access to lawyers up to 24 hours, and tortured during secret interrogations.

Detainees are kept off "official booking databases. Some young as 15 are painfully shackled for long periods, beaten and terrorized.

Homan Square is in Chicago's west side North Lawndale district. It's home to the original

1905 Sears, Roebuck and Co. property.

Many of its buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Perhaps Gitmo in America will be included one day. More on the Guardian's report below.

Chicago police have a longstanding reputation for brutality. They have virtual carte blanche authority to operate with impunity.

They take full advantage. From 1972 - 1991, detective Jon Burge got away with torturing over 200 detainees. Instead of dismissal and prosecution, he was promoted.

Dozens of victims complained. Suits followed. Finally, after 21 abusive years, he was fired.

Community outrage stopped a March 1993 Fraternal Order of Police plan to honor him with a float in Chicago's annual St. Patrick's Day parade.

On October 21, 2008, he was indicted on two counts of obstructing justice and one count of perjury. On June 28, 2010, he was convicted on all counts. He's the exception proving the rule.

It took decades for partial justice. Few police are prosecuted - almost never one of high rank. Burge rose from street cop to detective commander. Over two decades, he got 13 commendations and a Justice Department letter of praise.

His crimes were well-known. A code of silence hid them. He was honored until his luck ran out. He got off mildly.

He received four and half years in prison. His crimes and similar ones committed by other rogue cops should never have been allowed in the first place.

This writer personally knows a Chicago cop torture victim. He committed no crimes. Yet he was lawlessly arrested, detained and brutalized for being Black in the wrong place at the wrong time.

He remains justifiably outraged. Rogue cops weren't punished. Nor their superiors. During Chicago's May 2012 NATO summit, Chicago police viciously assaulted peaceful protesters.

Dozens were hurt. Victims had head injuries, broken bones and teeth knocked out. Many required hospitalization.

In Black and Latino communities, police brutality rages. Cracked skulls, arrests and brutality in detention reflect longstanding practice.

Chicago is a mini-police state. Last year, a Chicago organization called We Charge Genocide produced a report charging city police with "systematic horrific & punitive police violence against Black and Brown youths on a daily basis."

ACLU human rights program director Jamil Dakwar says

"(i)t's time for systemic policing reforms and effective oversight that make sure law enforcement agencies treat all citizens with equal respect and hold officers accountable when they cross the line."

Chicago police lie saying

“CPD abides by all laws, rules and guidelines pertaining to any interviews of suspects or witnesses, at Homan Square or any other CPD facility.”

“If lawyers have a client detained at Homan Square, just like any other facility, they are allowed to speak to and visit them.”

“It also houses CPD’s Evidence Recovered Property Section, where the public is able to claim inventoried property.”

The Guardian report explained systematic abuse of power and denial of fundamental constitutional rights.

“At least one man was found unresponsive in a Homan Square (so-called) ‘interview room’ and later pronounced dead,” it said.

Brian Jacob Church was one of the 2012 NATO Three protesters. He was arrested and held incommunicado at Homan Square for nearly 24 hours before being booked at local police station.

He commented to the Guardian as follows, saying:

“Homan Square is definitely an unusual place. It brings to mind the interrogation facilities they use in the Middle East.”

“The CIA calls them black sites. It’s a domestic black site. When you go in, no one knows what’s happened to you.”

“...I wasn’t allowed to make any contact with anybody.”

He was painfully shackled for about 17 hours.

“I had essentially figured, ‘All right, well, they disappeared us and so we’re probably never going to see the light of day again.’”

Lawyers seeking access to Homan Square are routinely turned away. According to Chicago attorney Julia Bartmes:

“It’s sort of an open secret among attorneys that regularly make police station visits, this place – if you can’t find a client in the system, odds are they’re” at Homan.

Civil rights attorney Flint Taylor accused Chicago police of Fifth and Sixth Amendment violations.

He omitted 8th Amendment prohibitions against “cruel and unusual punishments.”

He said Homan Square reflects

“an institutionalization of the practice that dates back more than 40 years, of violating a suspect or witness’ rights to a lawyer and not to be physically or otherwise coerced into giving a statement.”

When a Guardian reporter tried gaining access to Homan, a guard “refused any entrance and would not answer questions,” the paper said.

“This is a secure facility. You’re not even supposed to be standing here,” the guard said.

Detainees taken there “just disappear,” said criminal defense attorney Anthony Hill.

Their whereabouts is unknown “until they show up at a district for charging or are just released back out on the street.”

Chicago police guidelines prohibit Homan Square practices. A “Processing Persons Under Department Control” directive says the following:

“(I)nvestigation or interrogation of an arrestee will not delay the booking process.”

Anyone arrested must be allowed

“a reasonable number of telephone calls (to attorneys straightaway) after their arrival at the first place of custody.”

“Arrestee and In-Custody Communications (must) allow visitation by attorneys.”

According to the Guardian:

“The combination of holding clients for long periods, while concealing their whereabouts and denying access to a lawyer, struck legal experts as a throwback to the worst excesses of Chicago police abuse, with a post-9/11 feel to it.”

Former Chicago public defender/current Valparaiso University Law School dean Andrea Lyon calls Homan Square “analogous to the CIA’s black sites,”

Chicago Justice Project’s Tracy Siska says

“(t)he real danger in allowing practices like Guantanamo or Abu Ghraib is the fact that they always creep into other aspects.”

“They creep into domestic law enforcement, either with weaponry like with the militarization of police, or interrogation practices.”

“That’s how we ended up with a black site in Chicago.”

A follow-up February 26 Guardian report said city police didn’t respond to its questions.

What’s ongoing in Chicago likely happens elsewhere across America. US jails, detention facilities and prisons are notoriously brutal.

An earlier article discussed a 2005 UK Deborah Davis Channel 4 report titled “Torture, Inc., America’s Brutal Prisons.”

It explained prisoners brutally shocked with cattle prods, burned by toxic chemicals, harmed by stun guns, beaten, stripped naked and abused in various other ways.

Sound familiar, it asked? Welcome to Guantanamo in America..

Videos Britain's Channel 4 aired made disturbing viewing. They show guards yelling and abusing prisoners.

"(O)rdering them to lie on the ground and crawl. (If not) fast enough, a guard kicks (them) or stomps on (their) back."

One man screamed when a dog bit his lower leg. Another had his ankle broken, couldn't crawl fast enough, and was painfully tasered on his buttocks.

Hours later, his body still shook uncontrollably. Images revealed reflected Gitmo or Abu Ghraib practices in US prisons.

Horrifying evidence of America's brutality. Commonplace abroad and at home at the federal, state and local levels.

Chicago is a microcosm of systemic US ruthlessness. Torture without accountability is the clearest example.

Sadism writ large best explains it. Nothing in prospect suggests change.

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