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DOROTHY BURGE

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**MAKES**

**ME**

**WANNA**

**HOLLA**

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DOROTHY BURGE

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**MAKES  
ME  
WANNA  
HOLLA**

*Makes Me Wanna Holla* is made possible through the Human Rights Lab and the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at UChicago inaugural 2022 Practitioner Fellows Program. As part of this fellowship, artists created a fellowship project of their own design that explores an aspect of the carceral system, curate their own series of public events, and participate in various community and university engagements throughout the year.

Practitioner Fellow, Dorothy Burge was supported in part by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the Centering Race Consortium, a partnership between race studies centers at Brown University, Stanford University, UChicago, and Yale University to center the study of race in the arts and humanities.

Design: Rachel Ko.

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# INTRODUCTION

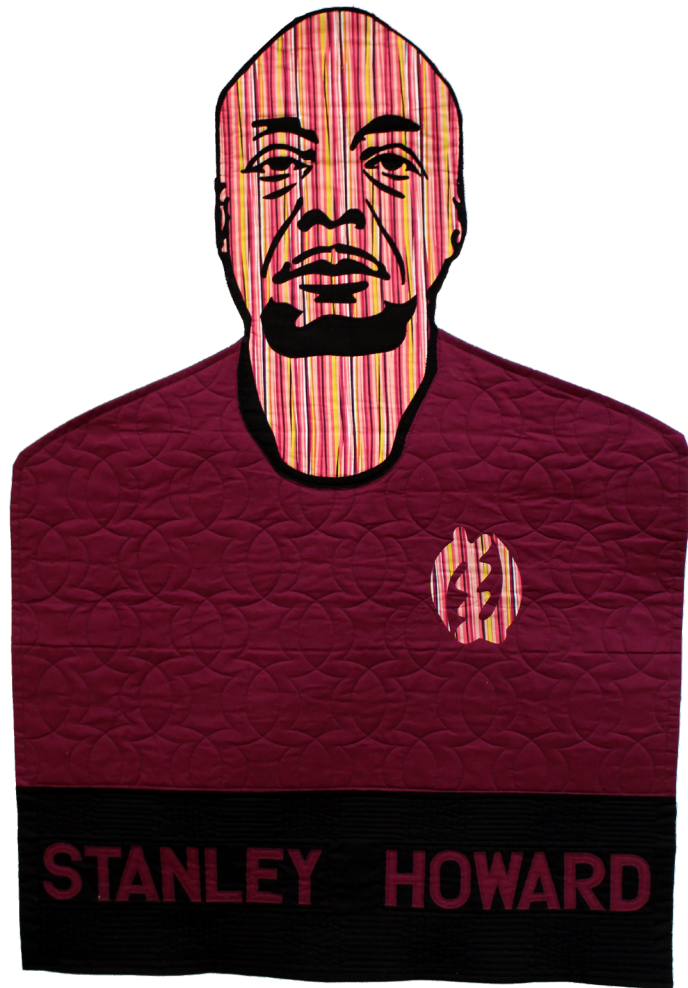
By Sarah Ross

In 2023, Dorothy Burge was a Nichols Tower Artist-in-Residence at the School of the Art Institute at Homan Square. Through this residency, Dorothy met and worked with a class of graduate students studying interpretations – the museum practice of creating educational material to help audiences make meaning of art. While most interpretation practices focus on the work of art including the materials and methods of making, these students sought to highlight the subject of Dorothy’s artwork: the survivors of Chicago Police torture. Over several months, the class corresponded with survivors in prison and their family members to tell their stories in their own words. This guide urges you, the audience, to look and listen to people who have survived this horrific chapter in Chicago’s history. Further, you are urged to action, as these survivors are still locked up, serving time based on confessions extracted by racist police torture.

Note that some of the quilts in this exhibition do not have stories that accompany them. Similarly,

some of the stories in this booklet do not have quilts made yet. This is a work in progress as Dorothy Burge continues this practice of documenting each survivor with a quilt portrait.

Interviews and texts in this edition were written by Ghaleyia Almansoori, Carla Burkert, Ivette Cruz, Genevieve Glahn, Catalina Gongora Bernoske, Sophie Mendelsohn, Schetauna Powell, Sarah Ross and Zach Sabitt.



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## STANLEY HOWARD

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Born in 1962, Stanley Howard was raised in a working-class Bronzeville home with his older brother and three sisters. His mother and stepfather worked relentlessly, and he credits his grandmother for being the voice of stability in crisis or emergency. Fed up with the gang problem at his school, Stanley dropped out at 16 and began working with his father. When he wasn't working, Stanley was playing pool with friends or at the neighborhood bars. He loved step dancing to Ronald Isley and The Isley Brothers—his absolute favorite band to this day. Stanley also spent time raising his kids, Stanley Boston, Stanley West, and Danielle Jones. Stanley remains in contact with each despite his incarceration.

When Stanley was 21, he was arrested for allegedly robbing two Chicago police officers. Two days later, on November 3, 1984, he was transferred to Area 2 Police Headquarters, where he was handcuffed to a ring on the wall, beaten, kicked, and slapped by two detectives, James Lotito and Ronald

**“I’VE BEEN FOREVER CHANGED BECAUSE I WAS TAUGHT THAT I HAVE AN OBLIGATION AND DUTY TO GET IN THE FIGHT. THERE WILL BE NO STANDING ON THE SIDELINES AND HOPING THAT THINGS WILL GET BETTER — I HAD TO GET IN THE FIGHT IN SOME FORM OR FASHION TO MAKE IT BETTER.”**

**Stanley Howard**

Boffo, and their sergeant, John Byrne, all working under the command of Jon Burge. Lotito suffocated Stanley with a plastic typewriter cover until he passed out. As he screamed for help, Stanley believed they would kill him. The next day, when officers approached Stanley with the same plastic cover, Stanley signed a confession to a murder he did not commit. This coerced confession placed Stanley on death row.

In 1998, after years of fighting his sentence, Stanley started an activist group with nine other men dubbed the “Death Row 10.” Together they succeeded in reversing death row inmate Anthony Porter’s conviction based on his forced confession. Using evidence of torture from Porter’s case, the group convinced then-Governor George Ryan to issue a blanket moratorium on death row cases and pardon four of the Death Row 10: Aaron Patterson, Leroy Orange, Madison Hobley, and Stanley Howard. The group continued their fight until 2011, when then-Governor Pat Quinn officially abolished the death penalty in Illinois, commuting the sentences of all 15 people on death row.

Beyond death row, Stanley has kept busy over the past 38 years. He earned an associate’s degree, a paralegal/legal assistant diploma, and numerous trade certificates. His column, “Keeping It Real,” was published in the national newsletter

of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, and he started “Prisoners Against the War” after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. With help from torture survivors Mark Clements, Marvin Reese, and Ronald Kitchen, Stanley has written a book about his experience, *Tortured By Blue*. He has also written plays about police torture, which will premiere at an event he plans to hold annually on the first Sunday of August, beginning this year in Washington Park.

After 39 years fighting from behind bars—including 16 on death row—Stanley is set for release in November 2023. He plans to use his legal and writing skills to restart his non-profit Exonerees and Ex-cons for Change to Fight Against the System on Many Levels. Looking forward, Stanley is very excited to spend time with his family and grandkids.

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## ERWIN DANIEL

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Erwin Daniel was 18 years old when he was taken into custody by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) for interrogation in 1985. Erwin was born at St. Luke’s Presbyterian Hospital and grew up on the South Side of Chicago. He is the youngest of four brothers and always enjoyed cooking for the family. He learned how to bake from his mother. Today he refers to himself as a loving “uncle-daddy” to his nieces and nephews. In 2005, Erwin raised his first allegation against Jon Burge, stating he was interrogated by officers for hours and intermittently hit with a flashlight and threatened with a gun. Erwin was coerced into signing a confession without attorney guidance. Following the confession, he was sentenced to prison at Cook County Jail. A year later, he was transferred to Stateville Correctional Center. Still young but tried as an adult, Erwin recognized he either needed to grow up fast or become lost in the system like so many others. He started taking classes, then quit for a while, feeling like there was no point to his life sentence. Erwin



worked various jobs until he received a placement in the kitchen as a dishwasher and quickly moved up to cook. Having his love of cooking back and feeling a sense of purpose making meals for all within the facility, Erwin was motivated to go back to school and continue taking classes. Due to the length of his sentence, the warden first denied him entry to courses. Through continuous efforts by Erwin's mom, Gladys, who made multiple contacts at the Correctional Center, Erwin received his GED and then completed a Small Business Management Degree from Penn Foster.

Today, at age 56, Erwin has spent most of his life in prison. He works as a chef at Hill Correctional Center and holds a co-educator position under Professor Christie Billups at Lewis University. Alongside cooking, Erwin also enjoys writing and poetry. His mother remembers him being loving and helpful as a child, traits she still sees in him today. She has been a relentless advocate and worked tirelessly to bring justice for her son. Mark Clements, Chicago torture survivor and advocate who knows Gladys explains, "Gladys Daniel was very inspirational in fighting for her son's release. The struggle has continued for more than 25 years. She first came together with the Campaign to End the Death Penalty."

When asked what he would like to do outside of



prison, Erwin wishes to help youth and expand the Daniel-Taylor Foundation, which he started in honor of his brothers and father who have passed away. The Foundation organizes donations of hats and gloves to members of the homeless community. Erwin hopes to expand the Foundation so they can provide toiletries and socks in the summer. He would also like to spend time with his family and raise children of his own.



Artwork by Erwin Daniel

## CHAINED

*To be chained from the outside world  
is like losing your keys*

*Locked away from the person that brings  
me closer to reality, I miss your face*

*The face that is joyful, full of tender  
expressions that makes me forget  
I'm bound to a place of lost souls*

*A place of unwanted words of love,  
forgiveness and feelings*

*The chains which separates  
good from evil*

*Who made you judge?*

*The judge that took me away from  
my realistic will to care*

*Chained me to a harsh primate that  
doesn't understand that I need you*

*I need your touch, smile and love.*

*Why chain me to such evil when  
I'd rather be chanted to you, Freedom.*

**Erwin Daniel**

## A MOTHERS HANDS

*A mother's hands are soft to the touch,  
but can be strong when they need to be.*

*A mother's hands can lift you up  
when you're feeling down.*

*A mother's hands are always there  
to wipe away unwanted tears.*

*A mother's hands can be that embrace  
if no one else wants to hold you.*

*A mother's hands are a teacher from  
generation to generation,  
but the best thing about a mother's hands  
is they give out the best hugs.*

**Erwin Daniel**

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## DARRELL FAIR

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Darrell Fair remembers his life in rural Arkansas in 1967, sitting on the floor watching his mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother make “beautiful quilts with beautiful patterns stuffed with cotton.” In 1970, Darrell’s family moved to Chicago, where he grew from a clean-cut young man into an upstanding adult. Darrell’s story is emblematic of the American ideal: hard work, service, community building, and consistent striving toward a better future. Darrell’s values and integrity come from his family, who infused his life with love and care throughout his development, ultimately anchoring Darrell’s work as a social justice artist.

Darrell’s mother, Atsia Fair, made a modest living driving a CTA bus after her husband’s death and focused on providing her children with a good foundation. Her efforts began to pay off when she secured a house to raise her family. However, Atsia is, in her words, “very aware of the difference your nationality makes. With a good education, you can achieve quite a bit. But the system is different for

all of us.” Recalling her conversations with Darrell when he graduated high school, Atsia says how proud she was that Darrell was substance-free with a bright future ahead of him. She mentioned Darrell worked hard as an officer in the Marine Corps, where he made his way up the ranks and eventually had over 40 men serving under his command.

After leaving the Marines in September 1998, Darrell was arrested at home. Darrell informed the arresting officers he had asthma and needed his medication, but they denied his request and took him to Area 2 of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). The officers, including Michael McDermott, a detective previously under Jon Burge’s command, interrogated Darrell for roughly 30 hours. During that time, Darrell was kicked, threatened, and denied access to medication and food until he signed a confession. In 2016, Darrell brought his case to the Illinois Appellate Court, which, due to McDermott’s connection to Burge, the Torture Act was expanded to include officers who worked under Burge.

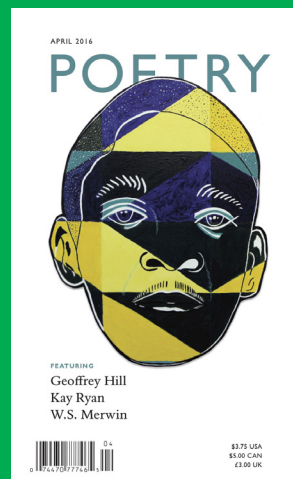
Working with various mediums, including painting, charcoal drawing, performance, animation, block printing, and dance Darrell uses his art to uplift voices and make a difference in his community. Darrell co-created two murals in Chicago: *Faces of Hope*, formerly in North Lawndale, and *It’s Time*, a



dedication to Dr. Margaret Burroughs, currently at Washington Park Fieldhouse. Darrell has continued his education and is working on completing his master's degree. In 2022, he was artist-in-residence at the DEMIL Art Fund, and in 2023 his art was featured at the Newberry Library in the *Surviving the Long Wars: Residues and Rebellions* exhibition. Beyond fighting the injustices of his legal case, Darrell also fights for other wrongfully convicted people to help them gain their freedom.

**Right:** Self Portrait of Darrell on the cover of Poetry magazine

**Below:** Mural designed by Darrell Fair in North Lawndale (2017–2020)



## MICHELLE Y. CLOPTON

Born and raised in Chicago, Michelle Clopton calls herself a “conqueror,” an apt description for a survivor of torture and heartbreaking personal loss. In 1996 Michelle was arrested by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) on charges of first-degree murder, which the CPD alleged she committed with two other people. Michelle was held for at least 38 hours while brutally interrogated and tortured by James Boylan and Michael McDermott, former CPD detectives with significant histories of abuse complaints. While detained, Michelle was refused an attorney, one of many violations of her Constitutional rights. Michelle was physically assaulted, including being kicked, grabbed, spat on, and having her hair pulled. She was yelled at and demeaned with insults, such as being called a “lying bitch.” Boylan and McDermott also used deceit as a coercive tactic, intentionally misleading her into believing a confession would garner her leniency by the court. Ultimately, to end the torture, Michelle made a false confession, and at 26 years old, she

**I WANT  
PEOPLE TO  
KNOW WHERE  
I COME  
FROM, WHAT  
I ENDURED,  
AND HOW  
I BECAME A  
CONQUEROR.**

**Michelle Y. Clopton**



was sentenced to 60 years in prison.

Unlike many other CPD torture survivors, though, Michelle is no longer behind bars. After spending over half her life in prison, Michelle finally returned home to her friends and family, including her two sisters and seven brothers. She is particularly close with her sister, Sharon, as well as her nephew, Trent, and friend, Mark. She also has a special family connection to quilting through her grandmother, Annie, who was a quiltmaker in Kilmichael, Mississippi. Michelle enjoys bowling and skating, as well as interior decorating and writing. She has authored a manuscript, *Through the Midst of It All*, which she hopes to publish soon.

Before her incarceration, Michelle lost her 5-year-old son, Khalif, who was killed in a car accident on his way home from school. Michelle says she remains a parent at heart, a testament to her refusal to be defined or defeated by the tragedies and injustices she has endured. Above all, Michelle's dreams for her future are "to motivate others who may need hope, encouragement, and the tenacity to move forward in life despite their trauma or shortcomings" and "to be of service and make a great impact" on the lives of others.

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## AUBREE DUNGEY

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Aubree Dungey comes from a family of artists and educators. His father, Dr. Aherene Dungey, was a professor of political science at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio, and his mother, Gertrude Illeen Matthews, received her Masters in Arts and Education. Aubree traveled between Illinois, Ohio, and Florida during his childhood. In 1999 he was arrested at gunpoint, beaten, and dragged to a squad car by arresting officers. He was taken to Area 2 Police Station, where he was threatened, deprived of sleep, food, and water, and handcuffed for 3 days as part of the investigation into the murder of Damone Mims.

Before his arrest, Aubree Dungey was busy planning for his future. He worked as a security officer certified in K-9 handling and owned multiple properties, including the two-flat home he inherited from his parents. He enjoyed fishing, spending time with relatives, and dancing at Chicago nightclubs. The last place Aubree remembers going to was the Shedd Aquarium. At the time of his arrest, Aubree



was awaiting the birth of his daughter and planning his marriage. Since his incarceration, that dream of marriage gave way to a life dedicated to proving his innocence. In the process, Aubree Dungey became a certified paralegal to fight an unequal system he has become a part of. Taking after his mother's artistic pursuits, Aubree creates a life full of expression. In the 24 years Aubree has been incarcerated, he has written one novel and nine screenplays and spent years designing his own clothing line. Aubree Dungey is now 49 years old.

Aubree has been fighting for this freedom since his unlawful arrest. It has taken him more than twenty years to fight these legal battles.

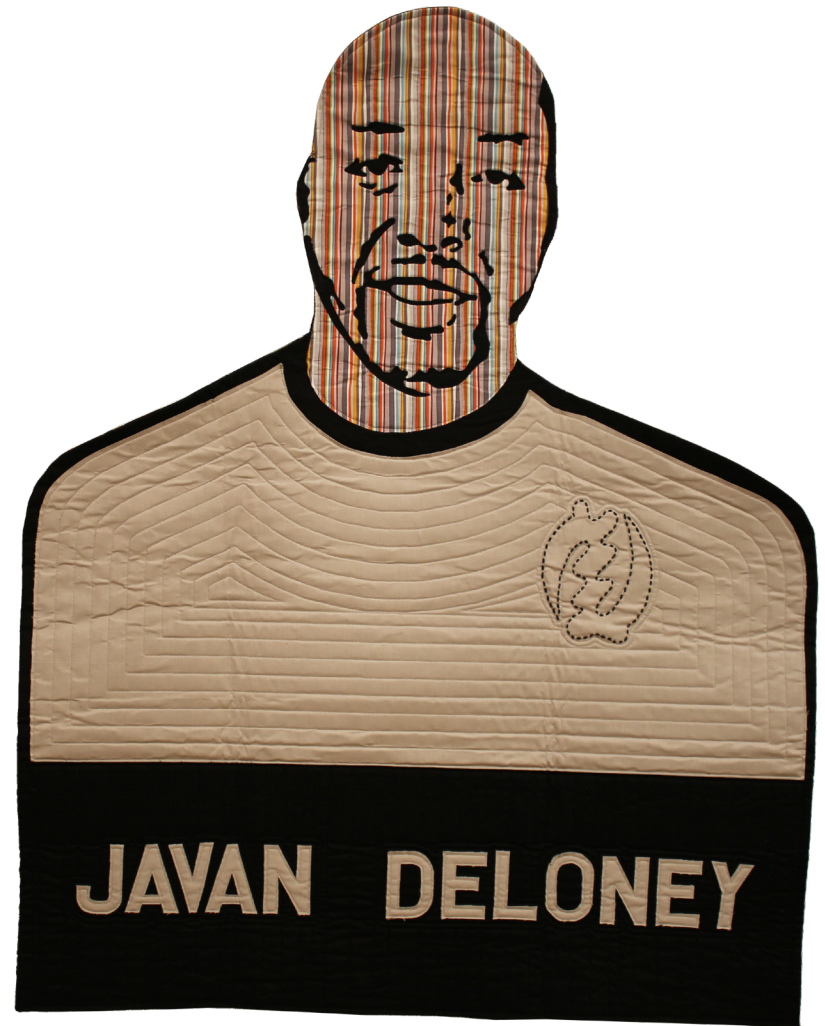
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# JAVAN DELONEY

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Javan Deloney is a man who, first and foremost, loves and appreciates his family. As an only child, he enjoyed spending time with his big, close-knit family, including two brothers on his father's side. Javan loved working with his hands—building and fixing bikes, go-karts, and treehouses—and dreamed of using his skills to help others. In 1991, at just 18 years old, Javan was arrested by the Chicago Police Department and tortured into making a false confession. “In a blink of an eye,” Javan says, “I went from a loving son to a torture victim to a survivor.”

Over the past 3 decades, Javan's family has unwaveringly loved and supported him, encouraging him not to lose hope. Unfortunately, 30 have passed away while he has been in prison, including Javan's mother, Curtistine Deloney, with whom he was incredibly close. He feels “blessed and honored... to have been born to the most beautiful and loving person in the world” and still cherishes their favorite song, “Love's Gonna Last” by Jeffree. In 2013, after 18 years of marriage, Javan's wife, LaShawn





Deloney, also passed away.

Despite experiencing so much pain and heartache, Javan refuses to be defined by the torture he endured. Although he cannot get back the decades spent in prison, Javan looks forward to opportunities as a free man, such as working in real estate. Exercise and running help take his mind off negative thoughts while he continues to fight for justice and garner support for other torture survivors. Javan recognizes, “It took a lot of bad police to lock us up, so it’s going to take a lot of love and community to fight to set us free.” But Javan is confident that, with his “beliefs and God’s will, [he’ll] be a free man one day soon.”

**“IT’S HARD FOR SOME TO LOOK AT ME AND SEE MY INNOCENCE BECAUSE I’VE BEEN INCARCERATED FOR OVER 30 YEARS. SO IF YOU CONTINUE TO JUDGE ME BY MY CIRCUMSTANCES AND NEVER WALK THE PATH I’VE HAD OR ENDURE THE STRUGGLES I’VE BEEN THROUGH, YOU’LL NEVER SEE ME. PLEASE LOOK.”**

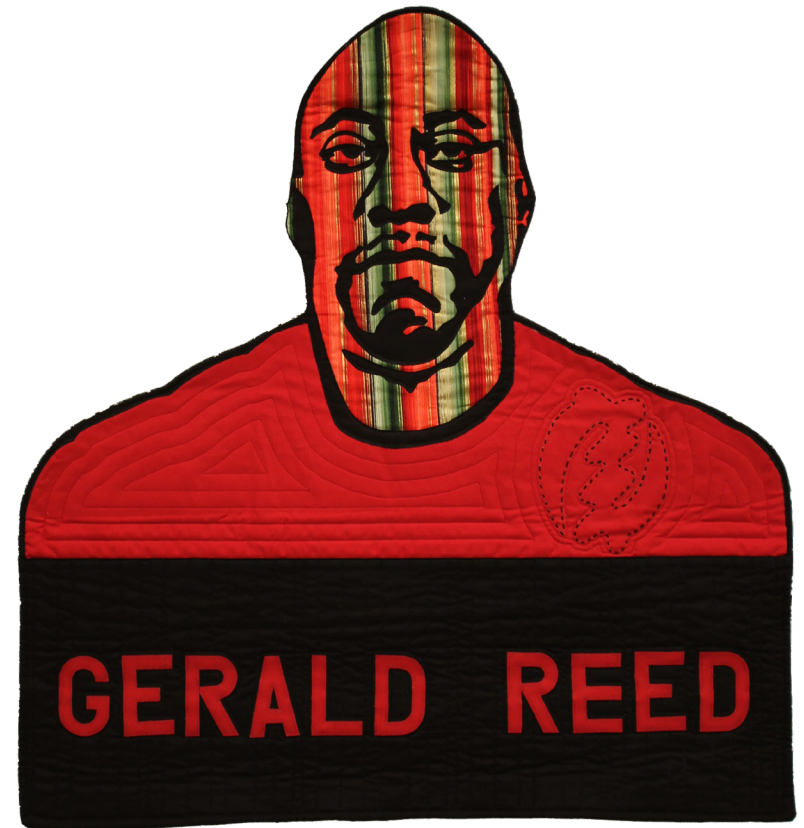
**Javan Deloney**

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# GERALD REED

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Gerald Reed loves the water. His favorite thing to do is to go to Lake Michigan. It's where he can go to clear his mind. In 1990, when Gerald was 27 years old, he was arrested by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and questioned regarding a double homicide committed two days earlier. Gerald was taken to Area 3, where Michael Kill and Victor Breska, former CPD detectives, beat him so viciously they broke a metal rod in his right thigh that had repaired a gunshot injury sustained years before. This injury caused unspeakable pain, leading Gerald to use crutches or a wheelchair throughout his incarceration. Gerald confessed to the double murder to stop the torture. No other material evidence against him was presented at trial, and Gerald was convicted based solely on his false confession and sentenced to life in prison. For the next 30 years, he and his supporters, including his mother, Armanda Shackelford, fought for Gerald's freedom. Armanda attended every hearing for her son for over 30 years. Like other "mothers



of the movement,” Armanda has relentlessly fought for justice for torture survivors.

After a review by the Torture Inquiry Relief Commission, Cook County Judge Thomas Gainer vacated Gerald’s conviction in 2018 and ordered a new trial. However, when Judge Gainer retired, a new judge, Thomas Hennelly, overturned Gainer’s decision to grant Gerald a new trial. Hennelly declared Gerald guilty and sent him back to prison for life. While this ruling was questionable and scrutinized, the onset of COVID delayed further proceedings and greatly impacted Gerald’s already compromised health. Throughout that time, Gerald was offered plea deals to end the legal battles and be released from prison, but he always refused, telling his mother, “Mama, I can’t do that. Because if I take a plea deal, those crimes will be on me for the rest of my life. I would make you out to be a liar. And that’s something I won’t do.” In 2021, Governor Pritzker commuted Gerald’s sentence, and for the first time in 30 years, he walked out of prison as a free man.

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## ROBERT ORNELAS

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Robert Ornelas grew up in South Deering, a neighborhood in Chicago’s far South Side. He was incarcerated when he was 18 years old. Robert loves to draw and paint Chicano art and culture from the ’80s and ’90s. Robert was a student at Columbia College, where he majored in music, art, and business before his incarceration. His father, Francisco Ornelas, describes him as an intelligent young man and adds, “He goes out of his way to help others in his same situation, even when he is going through hardships of his own. He has a set of positive qualities that are very hard to find in a person.” Francisco describes his son as agreeable, approachable, and personable, and he has been told by prison guards that they do not understand why Robert is incarcerated. Robert loves to make jokes and cheer people up. He comes from a family of activists whose strength has been both tested and sharpened since his incarceration. Francisco and his late wife Mary were members of the activist group MAMAs, a network of people who support mothers of those who have been

wrongfully convicted, who often live in working-class neighborhoods on the West and South Side of Chicago. Mary also fought for justice for her son up until her death. According to Mark Clements, a Chicago police torture survivor who has continued to raise awareness about his experience and fight for justice, Mary joined forces with mothers who fought hard to end the death penalty in Illinois even though Robert himself was not on death row.

In the same spirit, today, Robert goes out of his way to help new people adjust when they enter prison. Robert shares books, resources, and even money with other people imprisoned with him. His father supports him by making sure he always has enough money and buying him any books he needs. Francisco has been working with activist groups to figure out ways Robert can be released. According to Francisco, “Once found guilty, it is difficult to obtain an appeal.” The family has petitioned the governor of Illinois for Robert’s freedom. Additionally, Robert has submitted a claim to the Torture Inquiry Relief Commission, and they have tried other legal remedies that could result in his release. Unfortunately, these efforts have not yet yielded the desired results. Nevertheless, Francisco continues pressing forward for solutions. Today, Francisco preserves the artwork that he receives from his son.

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Robert Ornelas creció en South Deering, un vecindario en el extremo sur de Chicago. Fue encarcelado cuando tenía 18 años. A Robert le encanta dibujar y pintar el arte y la cultura chicana de los años 80 y 90. Robert era estudiante en Columbia College, donde se especializó en música, arte y negocios antes de su encarcelamiento. Su padre, Francisco Ornelas, lo describe como un joven inteligente y agrega: “Se esfuerza por ayudar a otros en su misma situación, incluso cuando él mismo está pasando por dificultades. Tiene un conjunto de cualidades positivas que son muy difíciles de encontrar en una persona”. Francisco describe a su hijo como agradable, accesible y afable, y los guardias de la prisión le han dicho que no entienden por qué Robert está encarcelado. A Robert le encanta hacer bromas y animar a la gente. Viene de una familia de activistas cuya fuerza ha sido probada y agudizada desde su encarcelamiento. Francisco y su difunta esposa Mary eran miembros del grupo activista MAMAs, una red de personas que apoyan a las madres de quienes han sido condenados injustamente, y que a menudo viven en barrios de clase trabajadora en el lado oeste y sur de Chicago. María también luchó por la justicia para su hijo hasta su muerte. Según Mark Clements, un superviviente de torturas de la policía de Chicago que ha seguido creando conciencia sobre su experiencia y luchando por la

justicia, Mary unió fuerzas con madres que lucharon duro para poner fin a la pena de muerte en Illinois a pesar de que el propio Robert no estaba en el condenado a la pena de muerte.

Con el mismo espíritu, hoy, Robert hace todo lo posible para ayudar a las personas nuevas a adaptarse cuando ingresan en prisión. Robert comparte libros, recursos e incluso dinero con otras personas encarceladas con él. Su padre lo apoya asegurándose de que siempre tenga suficiente dinero y comprando los libros que necesita. Francisco ha estado trabajando con grupos activistas para encontrar formas de liberar a Robert. Según Francisco, “una vez declarado culpable, es difícil obtener una apelación.” La familia ha solicitado al gobernador de Illinois la libertad de Robert. Además, Robert ha presentado un reclamo ante la Comisión de Alivio de Investigación de Tortura, y han intentado otros recursos legales que podrían resultar en su liberación. Desafortunadamente, estos esfuerzos aún no han dado los resultados deseados. Sin embargo, Francisco sigue presionando para encontrar soluciones. Hoy, Francisco conserva las obras de arte que recibe de su hijo.



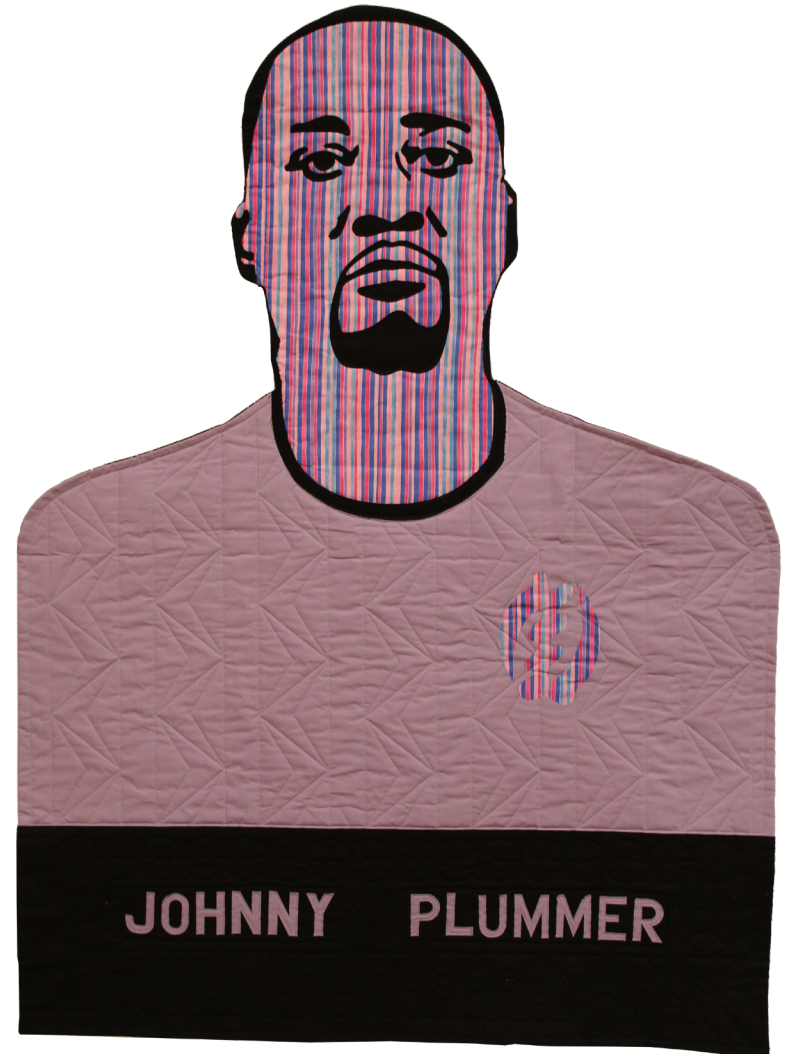
Artwork by Robert Ornelas

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# JOHNNY PLUMMER

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Johnny Plummer grew up in the neighborhood of Englewood with four brothers. He loved listening to blues and dusty slow jams, as well as watching his favorite shows like *Miami Vice* and *Different Strokes*. In 1991, at the age of 15, Johnny was arrested and held at Area 3 Police Station for 39 hours, during which time detectives Michael Kill and Kenneth Boudreau hit him with a flashlight, punched him, pulled his hair, and cuffed him to a radiator and a ring on the wall. The detectives proceeded to coerce Johnny into signing a confession for murder which he did out of fear and exhaustion. The false confession became the primary evidence in his 1995 conviction. However, in 2021, Johnny won an appeal on the grounds that the detectives withheld evidence pointing to other suspects of the crime, as well as the history of accusations of torture against Kill and Boudreau. According to the People's Law Office, "There was no physical evidence linking Johnny to this crime, and his conviction was predicated upon his alleged coerced confession and two tentative eyewitnesses,



**“MY DREAMS  
ARE TO BE  
TOTALLY  
EXONERATED,  
FREE, MARRIED  
WITH LOTS OF  
CHILDREN AND,  
GOD WILLING,  
ASSISTING OTHER  
WRONGFULLY  
IMPRISONED  
PEOPLE.”**

**Johnny Plummer**

one of whom did not see the shooting and the other who cannot reliably claim Johnny committed the murder.”

During his incarceration, he received his GED and then went on to work as a full-time paralegal, helping others with their cases. Johnny has remained an advocate for himself as well as others, continues to be passionate about fighting for justice, and is determined to clear his name. Johnny’s mother, Jeannette Plummer, has been his voice and advocate. Fellow Chicago torture survivor and advocate Mark Clements explains, “Jeanette Plummer has been fully inspirational in calling for accountability of police officers who tortured her son Johnny. She also played a large role in the People’s Law Office filing Class Action Post-Conviction Petition in 2011. She was very inspirational. She stood on the battlefield for her son.” Jeanette Plummer continues to advocate for his dreams as Johnny imagines what his life would be like outside of prison.

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# MICHAEL JOHNSON

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Michael Johnson describes himself as a “health NUT.” He loves working out and reading books and magazines. In the late '60s and early '70s, when Muslims came to Michael’s neighborhood to sell the *Final Call* newspaper, he was so impressed with their appearance and message that he decided to stop eating meat except for seafood—he loves seafood.

Michael has a really big family. The family’s matriarch, Mary L. Johnson, is his number one “shero.” She learned how to drive to visit Michael in prison, starting when he was 18 or 19 years old, and has continued to visit him for the past 50 years. Mary L. Johnson is a pioneer in the struggle against Chicago police torture. She has been on the front lines fighting to stop the death penalty and to free the wrongfully convicted. She fought to close the Tamms Supermax prison, where Michael spent 14 years, 9 months, and 26 days. Michael says his mother was “like a bad dream” to Jon Burge because she was “always in his face” and





responsible for exposing Burge's torture ring.

Michael spoke extensively about his family members and loved ones. To honor his commitment to his community and the people who support him, below is a brief description of Michael's family and those he loves:

*Michael is the youngest of Mary L. Johnson's four children. His siblings are Joe, Antony, and Nina. He also has many step-brothers and step-sisters. Michael was married three times; his wives were Zondra, Florence, and Camille. Through those marriages, Michael was a father to six children and has ten grandchildren. In addition, Michael's close friends include Cat, Michael, Marion, Rudia, and their families.*

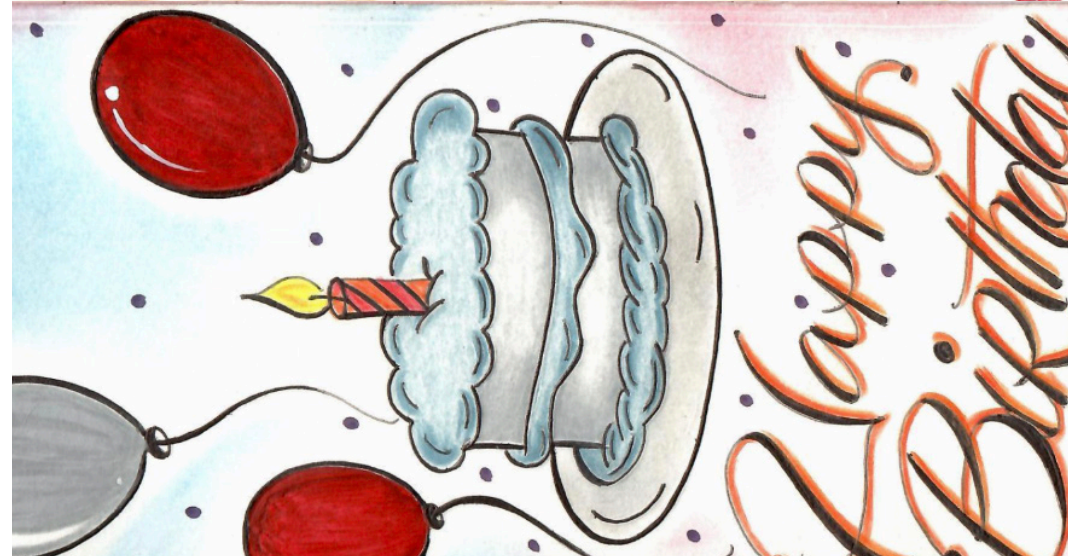
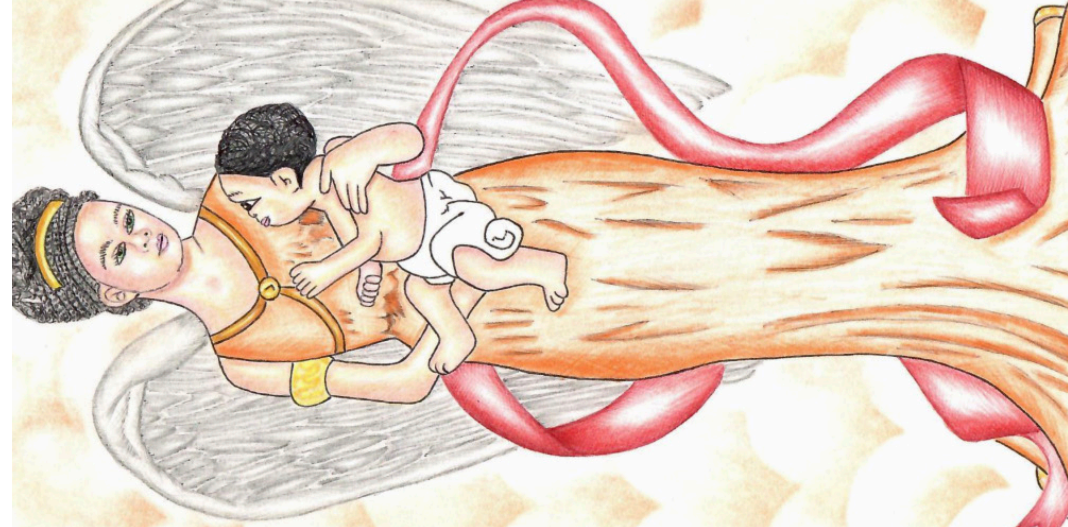
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## DANIEL VAUGHN

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Daniel Vaughn comes from a large, close-knit family, and his mother misses him a great deal. He cared for his younger sisters while the older siblings were away at college. According to his younger sister, Tanja, Daniel was known to be the "class clown" at holiday gatherings and was always overjoyed to be with his family. Daniel is also a very passionate cook, working as a certified chef in the prison where he is incarcerated. He enjoys cooking pizza and hamburgers and is known to experiment with recipes. When he was younger, he made his sisters breakfast and loved to make a variety of sandwiches for them. During visits to the prison, Daniel still provides cooking advice to his family members. Daniel also enjoys making homemade cards to send to his family during the holidays. Tanja describes him as intellectual, talented, a thinker, a protector, loving, and family-oriented. When asked what she envisions for him outside of prison, Tanja said she dreams of Daniel having a gallery to display his art and attending barbecue cook-offs with his

brothers. Tanja wants everyone to know that he is an exceptional, very talented man whose life on the outside was cut too short. Daniel was just 24 years old when he was arrested by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) in 1987. He was subjected to torture by CPD detectives McDermott and Yucaitis before signing a confession.



**Right:** Cards made by Daniel Vaughn and sent to family members for the holidays

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# ABDUL-MALIK MUHAMMAD

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In 1999 Abdul-Malik Muhammad was arrested and subsequently tortured by the Chicago Police Department into making a false confession. Upon entering prison at 19, he struggled to read and write. However, as a “lifelong learner,” Malik has been dedicated to his education while incarcerated and, in 2021, earned an associate’s degree from Oakton Community College. He will graduate from Northwestern University in 2023 with his Bachelor of Science degree. Malik is an activist, scholar, and writer whose play, “Shakedown,” was performed at the renowned Goodman Theater in Chicago in April 2023.

A father, brother, uncle, cousin, and friend, Malik’s parents and grandparents passed away while he was still behind bars. But as a survivor, he is one of the countless prisoners who continue to fight for exoneration from crimes they were convicted of by institutions built on racism and bigotry. Malik believes communities can heal and end the generational violence perpetuated



**“MY HOPE IS THAT ART CAN BE A TOOL TO DISMANTLE, ABOLISH, AND ERADICATE THIS LEVEL OF SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE WORLD. I ALSO HOPE ART WILL HELP REMIND THOSE ON THIS CONTINENT WHAT STATE VIOLENCE LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE TO SOMEHOW PREVENT US FROM BEING MARGINALIZED, AND PREVENT OUR PAIN AND SUFFERING AS TORTURE SURVIVORS FROM BEING NORMALIZED THROUGH BROKEN LEGISLATION AND CODIFIED RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE STILL HELD CAPTIVE BEHIND ENEMY LINES!”**

**Abdul-Malik Muhammad**

by hatred and oppression. He looks forward to establishing a community center for at-risk youth to immerse them in healthy activities, such as outdoor camping.

Malik’s case has garnered much publicity over the years. You can learn more about his fight for justice and how to support him by visiting his Facebook page, Free Abdul-Malik Muhammad, and reading his survivor story on the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (CAARPR) organization’s website.



Malik’s graduation from  
Oakton Community College

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