

Javan Deloney

On August 8, 1991, 18-year-old Javan Deloney was arrested and questioned regarding two drive-by shootings that resulted in a triple homicide on Chicago's South Side. Around 10pm on August 7, 1991 at the intersections of 65th/Peoria and at 516 W 71st there were two related drive-by shootings. In the first shooting, George Cruthard and Marcus Taylor were injured and Renhardo Bussle was killed. The three men were in front of a building at 6556 S. Peoria where a local gang, Gangster Disciples, typically sold drugs. Witnesses claimed they saw a red LeBaron and a taxi with members of a rival gang, the Black Disciples, drive by and begin shooting at them.

In the second shooting, the same taxi was seen shortly after while injuring Allen Epton and killing John Coleman and Gregory Archibald. Deloney reports he was at his friend Hudson's house at 6:30 p.m. and only left at 6:45 p.m. with Maurice, his friend, while borrowing Hudson's car, a red LeBaron. He reports he returned to the house with the car at 9:30 p.m. Later while being interrogated, Deloney states he was at his grandmother's house when the shootings occurred.

There were discrepancies amongst evidence and testimonies provided by eyewitnesses. According to eyewitnesses Epton and Brenda Hall, Deloney was present in the taxi that was involved in both shootings on August 7th. Witnesses later changed their accounts in a manner favorable to the prosecution and Cruthard did not identify any shooters until two years later just before his sentencing in a drug trafficking case. Cruthard recanted this identification in 2013. Additionally, Taylor did not identify any shooters until pressured to do so in 1993 and recanted this identification in 2013. Hall couldn't accurately describe shooting and only identified Deloney in a photograph array after the fourth time she was questioned by ASA James McKay in 1993 and recanted this identification in 1998. No fingerprints were found inside of the cab connected to both shootings. At this point, there is little to no evidence connecting Deloney to the August 7th shootings.

The detectives who interrogated Deloney, James O'Brien and Daniel McWeeny, are known for having a history of complaints alleging abuse to secure confessions. Deloney's cousin, Maurice and the other individuals thought to be involved with the shootings all experienced similar abuse and reported it in 2014 via affidavit. Several people reported in those 2014 affidavits hearing Deloney being beaten and screaming in response in his interrogation room. Additionally, Deloney's mother came to his booking in order to insist that he was taken to a hospital for his beatings after his cousin informed her Deloney had been beaten by the arresting officers.

Deloney reports in his testimony that the officers who interrogated him after his arrest verbally abused him, slapped him in the face and repeatedly punched him in the chest and side. Deloney was never told the names of any of these officers and they were in street clothes with no IDs. The officers interrogating him threatened him repeatedly saying they would keep him there all day if he wouldn't confess. He remained handcuffed to a chair while this happened. Deloney was eventually knocked to the ground while the officers repeatedly punched and kicked him in the chest, sides and legs.

Deloney continually denied any involvement and asked for a lawyer and to take a lie detector test. Deloney was not read his Miranda rights until approximately 2 a.m. when he was told to sign a confession prepared by the officers interrogating him. The confession was written and witnessed by ASA James McKay and Detectives James O'Brien and Daniel McWeeny and then signed by Deloney after hours of interrogation. Deloney was represented by attorneys Larry Dreyfus and Elliot Zinger. Judge Strayhorn tried Deloney's case in 1994 and the jury found Deloney guilty. He was then sentenced to life in prison. In 1997, Judge Kennelly denied Deloney's petition after reporting police brutality. In March of 1993 and 1994 Deloney filed motions to suppress his confessions after reporting these statements were coerced by torture.

Deloney's case was taken under review by the Illinois Torture Inquiry Relief Commission on January 18, 2017. They found that by a preponderance of the evidence, there is sufficient evidence of torture of Javan Deloney to merit judicial review.

Javan Deloney is currently in prison at Menard Correctional Center. The Alliance will provide more details as they are found out.