

## **Jerome Johnson**

On the evening of August 21, 1991, 19-year-old Jerome Johnson was arrested and transported to Area 3 of the Chicago Police Department to be questioned about the shooting of Jeremiah Miggins, age 11 and Kathryn Myles, age 14. Johnson was held in an interrogation room for over 24 hours with nothing to eat or drink. He was repeatedly slapped in the face and kicked in the wrists where his handcuffs were. Johnson was ultimately indicted on the two homicides based on the tortured confessions he gave.

According to Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Brent the homicide of Kathryn Myles occurred on June 9, 1991. ASA Brent alleged that Johnson and other individuals devised a plan to shoot up the area of 66<sup>th</sup> St. and Wolcott Avenue in retaliation for a previous altercation. In doing so, Johnson fatally shot an innocent bystander, Kathryn Myles. The second shooting was a gang-related dispute that led to the fatal shooting of Jeremiah Miggins, another innocent bystander, on August 21, 1991.

Jerome Johnson was interrogated by Detectives Michael Kill and John Halloran on August 21, 1991. ASA Brent also came in and questioned Johnson about the murder of Miggins. When Johnson refused to sign the written statement, two officers came into the room and beginning slapping him in the face and kicking him in the wrists. Johnson continued refusing to confess and so the officers left him in the dark, hot interrogation room for several hours with no food, water, or access to a bathroom.

Detective Kenneth Bourdreau and Michael Kill returned with ASA Brent on the morning of August 22, 1991, at which point Jerome Johnson signed a handwritten statement written by ASA Brent confessing to the murder of Jeremiah Miggins. Johnson was then taken back to the interrogation room where Detectives James O'Brien and Joseph Stehlik began questioning him regarding the shooting of Kathryn Myles the previous day. Questioning continued throughout the entirety of August 22 and didn't terminate until midnight on August 23 when Johnson signed a hand-written statement by Assistant State's Attorney Brian Grossman confessing to the murder of Kathryn Myles.

Jerome Johnson was held in an interrogation room from August 21 through August 23 with nothing to eat or drink and without access to a bathroom. Although many detectives testified that they offered use of a bathroom to Johnson, none testified that they ever took Johnson to a bathroom or gave him and food during this period.

Jerome Johnson filed a Motion to Suppress both confessions on March 4, 1992. Johnson filed this motion on the grounds that the statements were obtained as a result of physical, psychological, and mental coercion and were therefore involuntary in violation of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the US Constitution. Johnson's Motion to Suppress hearing was held on June 25, 1993 and during this hearing Johnson testified to the treatment that he experienced in the interrogation room prior to making his confession. He stated that he signed the first statement after a long night in a hot, dark room under the promise made by ASA Brent that after he signed he would be free to go. Detectives Halloran, Kill, O'Brien, and Stehlik along with State's Attorney Brent and Gross also testified during this hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing the

judge determined that there was no physical, psychological, or mental coercion and thus denied the motion to suppress the statements in both criminal cases against Johnson.

Jerome Johnson pled guilty in his first case for the murder of Kathryn Myles and the prosecution used Johnson's confession as factual basis for the plea. For the case regarding the murder of Jeremiah Miggins, Johnson went to trial. Johnson's attorney, Deborah Gubin, attempted to prohibit the introduction of the Myles homicide conviction in the event that Johnson took the stand. The state opposed this motion stating that they intended to introduce the conviction as a way to discredit Johnson if he took the stand. The state won and Gubin did not call Johnson to the stand during trial as the prosecution would have introduced the statement Johnson made and she would not have had the ability to attack and discredit the statement.

Johnson was found guilty of first-degree murder and two counts of aggravated battery with a firearm. Johnson was eligible for the death penalty but was charged with natural life in prison.

On July 25, 2011, Jerome Johnson filed a Petition to Withdraw Guilty Plea and Vacate Sentence which was denied as frivolous.

Johnson filed a complaint with the Torture Commission on September 11, 2011 stating that his conviction was wrongful because it was based on the confessions obtained through torture. The Torture Commission began interviews with Johnson on April 6, 2015. On March 28, 2018, the Torture Commission concluded that there is sufficient and credible evidence of torture to refer Johnson's case back for further review because Johnson's torture allegations have been largely consistent throughout the decades and due to the numerous allegations made by other claimants against Detectives Halloran, Boudreau, O'Brien, Stehlik, and Kill that were named in Johnson's claim.

Jerome Johnson is currently incarcerated at Stateville Correctional Center serving his life sentence.

Note: This case is very closely related to another individual included in this booklet, George Anderson. These two individuals were convicted of the same murders of Kathryn Myles and Jeremiah Miggins. Johnson and Anderson were tried separately as to not confuse jurors as to how two individuals could be convicted of killing the same people.