

Jackie Wilson

On February 9th, 1982 Detectives William Fahey and Richard O'Brien were killed during a traffic stop. The Chicago Police Department devoted hundreds of officers working around the clock and special funds were allocated to finding the perpetrators. They knocked on doors and harassed and beat the largely Black population of the Chicago South Side neighborhood in the process. It was the largest manhunt in more than a decade.

At approximately 8:05 a.m. on February 14, 1982, Jackie Wilson was arrested for the murders of Officers Richard O'Brien and William Fahey and the armed robbery of the officers' service firearms. His brother Andrew had been arrested earlier that morning for the same crimes. Jackie Wilson was transported to Area 1 police headquarters. Sometime after 8:30 a.m. Area 2 Detectives Dennis McGuire, Lawrence Nitsche, Dale Riordan, and Thomas Krippel transported him to Area 2, where torturer Jon Burge was stationed, for interrogation by officers Thomas McKenna and Patrick O'Hara.

Detectives Nitsche and McGuire elbowed Jackie Wilson in the abdomen repeatedly during the car ride to Area 2 when he asked about the shootings, and Krippel slapped him. He was taken to a room with 12 to 16 plainclothes officers and hit in the head with a telephone book and was warned it would happen every time he lied. When Wilson declined to talk he was hit with a book by about six officers as well as being poked and kicked. Another officer interrupted, and Wilson was read his rights. Around this time, he heard his brother yelling and feared he would suffer worse torture if he further declined to talk.

The officers continued to question and intermittently beat Wilson for another hour or two when they didn't like his answers. He was slapped, kicked in the groin, shaken, and had his hands twisted and stepped on. An unidentified officer held his service revolver in Wilson's mouth while others held his arms back and cocked and uncocked it repeatedly. O'Hara slapped Wilson and was told by McKenna not to injure his face. Once Wilson gave his confession, Detectives Nitsche and McGuire warned Wilson to give the Assistant State's Attorney Lawrence Hyman the same information or they would start all over. He initially refused to sign the court-reported statement and asked for a lawyer, at which point ASA Hyman left to contact Wilson's attorney R. Frederic Soloman, and O'Hara and McKenna returned. O'Hara threatened to break Wilson's fingers if he didn't sign.

In 1982 Judge John Crowley heard testimony on the motion by Jackie Wilson's court-appointed public defender to suppress the confession. That motion was denied and in 1983 under Circuit Court Judge John Crowley, the Wilson brothers were each convicted on two counts of murder for the deaths of the Officers Fahey and O'Brien and two counts of armed robbery for the taking of their service revolvers. In 1985 Jackie Wilson's case went back and forth between the appellate and state supreme courts and was ultimately remanded for a new trial.

On September 30th, 1987 the Appellate court upheld Judge Crowley's finding that Jackie Wilson's confession was voluntary, but reversed his conviction on the basis that he was entitled to be tried separately from his brother. He was retried in the spring of 1989 by Judge Michael

Getty and was found guilty on one count of murder of O'Brien and the armed robbery of both officers. Wilson's attorney Kenneth Jones filed a petition for leave to appeal in 1994 but it was denied by the state supreme court. In 2011 Jackie Wilson filed a claim with the torture commission.

In 2015 the commission concluded by a preponderance of evidence that there is sufficient evidence of torture to merit judicial review. Jackie Wilson is still vying for a new trial based on the torture he received at the hands of Burge and his men. Wilson is still incarcerated at Menard Correctional Center serving life without parole.