

# THE SAN FRANCISCO EIGHT

## FACT SHEET

### **A 36 Year-old Case!**

Eight former Black Panthers were arrested on January 23, 2007 and charged with the 1971 killing of a San Francisco police officer and three men with a sweeping conspiracy involving numerous acts between 1968 and 1973. Ray Boudreaux, 64; Richard Brown, 65; Hank Jones, 70; Richard O'Neal, 57; Harold Taylor, 58; and Francisco Torres, 58, were arrested in California, New York and Florida. Herman Bell, 59, and Jalil Muntaqim, 55, have already been serving time as political prisoners in New York State on other framed-up charges for over 30 years. A ninth man, Ronald Stanley Bridgforth, is still being sought. **NO NEW EVIDENCE HAS BEEN PUT FORWARD IN THIS DECADES-OLD CASE!** The conspiracy charge was dropped against Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones, Harold Taylor, and Richard O'Neal February 7, 2008 when defense motions correctly challenged the charges on the grounds that the statute of limitations on charges of conspiracy in California (three years) had expired. Richard O'Neal is now cleared of all charges. Similar motions to drop the conspiracy count against Herman Bell, Jalil Muntaqim, and Francisco Torres are now before the California Appeals Court.

### **This Case Is Based on Torture**

In 1973 Harold Taylor, John Bowman (recently deceased), and Ruben Scott were arrested and tortured by New Orleans police who were assisted by two San Francisco detectives, McCoy and Erdelatz. The torture included electric shock, cattle prods, beatings, sensory deprivation, plastic bags, and hot wet blankets for asphyxiation. After several days, the men made torture-coerced "confessions" that were scripted by the police. In an interview with KPFA in 1975, Ruben Scott renounced his "confession" and exposed the torture that he had endured. A Federal court ruled that torture had been illegally used and a San Francisco Judge tossed out the case because of this. Now, Ruben Scott is thought to be the government's chief witness. **THE PROSECUTION WILL TRY TO USE TORTURE-INDUCED EVIDENCE WHICH HAS NO CREDIBILITY AND IS INADMISSIBLE!**

### **Rooted in COINTELPRO**

COINTELPRO was the Federal Government's secret counter-intelligence program, which was used against the Black Panthers as well as other liberation movements, leftists and political dissidents in the U.S. The FBI and local police forces assassinated, arrested, tortured and framed hundreds of Panthers, who were considered to pose the greatest threat to the racist status quo of U.S. society. In San Francisco, the FBI wiretapped the Panther headquarters, infiltrated the organization and used every possible means to provoke violence within the organization. **THE SF8 CASE IS A CONTINUATION OF COINTELPRO'S ATTACK ON THE BLACK MOVEMENT AND COMMUNITY!**

### **Rewriting History**

Instead of exposing and prosecuting the government agents and agencies who were responsible for COINTELPRO crimes, this case persecutes the people who were targets of Government abuse and torture. None of the officers who were involved in the torture of Harold Taylor, John Bowman, and Ruben Scott were ever questioned or charged. The Church Senate Committee investigated COINTELPRO in 1975 and began to report on the abuses of law and power which had been committed, but no one was ever held accountable. **CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION INTO COINTELPRO'S TRUE HISTORY MUST BE REOPENED!**

### **Homeland Security and Grand Jury Witch hunts**

With funds made available by Homeland Security's post-9/11 "war against terrorism", the San Francisco Police Department reopened the investigation of the 1971 Ingleside murder of Sgt. Young and put detectives McCoy and Erdelatz from the original torture team in charge. Along with the FBI they began visiting dozens of people around the country in 2003, pressuring people to cooperate with the investigation. When visits failed to produce the desired results, grand juries were convened to subpoena people to testify. In 2005, Brown, Boudreaux, Taylor, Jones, and Bowman were jailed because they refused to cooperate with the grand jury witch hunt. After they were released when the grand jury did not indict, they formed **THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CDHR)** TO PUBLICIZE THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES PERPETRATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

## **The Abu Ghraib/Guantánamo Connection**

Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo, and Extraordinary Rendition have exposed the ugly reality that the U.S. employs and backs torture in prisons and detention facilities around the world in direct violation of international law. The U.S. has ignored the international outcry and instead has tried to legitimize its use of torture as necessary in its war against terror. The case of the San Francisco 8 extends the effort to make torture an acceptable practice to a domestic case. The prosecution is hoping that what was inadmissible 35 years ago has now been normalized. **THIS CASE COULD SET AN INTOLERABLE MORAL STANDARD AND A DISASTROUS LEGAL PRECEDENT!**

## **The War Against the Black Community**

Under the guise of fighting the “war against terrorism”, the case of the San Francisco 8 opens one more front in the government’s ongoing war against the Black community. Soaring numbers of Black and Brown people are being warehoused in prisons across the country, police brutality continues on a routine basis, and daily murders of Black youth go uninvestigated and unsolved. Hurricane Katrina has spotlighted the degree to which the government views Black lives and welfare as expendable on a massive level. **FROM THE BAY TO THE GULF THE SITUATION FOR THE MAJORITY OF BLACK PEOPLE HAS ONLY GOTTEN WORSE SINCE THE DAYS OF THE PANTHERS!**

## **Resistance is Possible and Necessary!**

As the situation for Black people in the U.S. deteriorates, the specter of Black organizing and resistance is as much of a threat to the government today as it was when the Panthers formed in 1966. The arrest of the San Francisco 8 is meant to send a chilling message to all those who might think about resisting today.

In 1998, former Panther Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt was released after 27 years in prison when he finally proved that he had been framed by a COINTELPRO plot. The San Francisco 8 are being targeted by a similar fabrication. The government’s cynical manipulation 35 years later must be exposed and stopped.

In an important victory, all six of those eligible for bail have been released. Thanks to amazing work by the Eight, their families, supporters, and lawyers, bail was reduced and property bonds were raised to win the release of Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Henry Jones, Richard O’Neal, Harold Taylor, and Francisco Torres. Jalil Muntaqim and Herman Bell are ineligible for bail despite being parole eligible in New York State. They have each served over 30 years in prison for their political ideas and their participation in the Black Liberation Struggle.

## **JOIN THE EFFORT TO FREE THE SAN FRANCISCO EIGHT, STOP TORTURE, EXPOSE COINTELPRO**

- Sign up for the e-mail list for up-to-date information and get more background at [www.freethesf8.org](http://www.freethesf8.org)
- Show the video *Legacy of Torture* which gives the background to the SF8 case
- Come to the courtroom to show your support; see web site for dates
- Donate to the national campaign to free the SF8 – mail to address below; tax deductible checks payable to CDHR/AGAPE; donate online at [www.freethesf8.org](http://www.freethesf8.org)
- Write to the SF8 (addresses below – check web site for updates)

**Herman Bell** #2301300, 850 Bryant Street, San Francisco CA 94103

**Ray Boudreaux**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109

**Richard Brown**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109

**Henry W. Jones**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109.

**Jalil Muntaqim** (Anthony Bottom), #2311826, 850 Bryant Street, San Francisco CA 94103.

**Richard O’Neal**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109.

**Harold Taylor**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109.

**Francisco Torres**, (out on bail) c/o CDHR P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109.

**Committee for the Defense of Human Rights**

**P.O. Box 90221, Pasadena, CA 91109**

**(415) 226-1120**

**[www.FreeTheSF8.org](http://www.FreeTheSF8.org)**

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