



Chicago Pays \$20M to Settle Torture Case

By DON BABWIN – Dec 7, 2007

CHICAGO (AP) — The city has agreed to pay nearly \$20 million to settle lawsuits filed by four former death row inmates who claimed they were tortured by Chicago police and wrongly convicted, an alderman said Friday.

Alderman Ed Smith hoped the settlement would help improve relations between police and residents, particularly the black community.

The deal involving the actions of former Lt. Jon Burge and his officers means "the city has stepped up to try to amend what a bad police commander did to the general public," Smith said.

"To bring this thing to fruition says to the general public that mistakes were made, and we should try to clear it up and start trying to heal."

The settlements still must be approved by the City Council's finance committee, which Smith expected to happen Monday.

The four inmates — Aaron Patterson, Leroy Orange, Stanley Howard and Madison Hobley — were part of a story that made international headlines in January 2003 when then-Gov. George Ryan pardoned them and commuted the sentences of every death row inmate in the state in a stinging rebuke of capital punishment.

Since then, their accounts and those of more alleged victims of torture from Burge and others have dogged the city.

Last year, two special prosecutors released a 300-page report that nearly 200 black men were tortured in police interrogation rooms in the 1970s and 1980s.

The \$19.8 million settlement calls for Hobley to receive \$7.5 million, Orange \$5.5 million, Patterson \$5 million and Howard \$1.8 million, Smith said.

But Hobley has been identified as a subject of a federal arson and murder investigation, and Smith said he will receive \$1 million when the settlement is approved and the other \$6.5 million at the end of 2009 if he has not been indicted.

Hobley and Orange have been out of custody since Ryan ordered them pardoned. Howard remained in prison on unrelated charges. Patterson was also released from prison, but in August was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison after being convicted of drug and weapon charges.

Jennifer Hoyle, spokeswoman for the city's law department, did not immediately return calls for comment on Friday.

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