

## Interview with Alnoraindus Burton

[00:00:02] **Amanda Rivkin** So if you could say your name and how old you are.

[00:00:04] **Alnoraindus Burton** Hello, my name is Alnoraindus Burton. I'm 50 years old.

[00:00:09] **Amanda Rivkin** And can you take us back to the day you were arrested.

[00:00:14] **Alnoraindus Burton** Back in January the 20th, 21st, Saturday morning. One of my friends, John and I, we went to buy some marijuana and we went on the block over from my house, the guys I knew. While we were there purchasing marijuana, it was an altercation, I guess, between some of the guys. So we wanted to get out of here. We left. About half, maybe two houses down, we heard like a pow, pow. So quite naturally, we ran, like everybody else. People ran out. It didn't sound like a gunshot. So we stopped at the corner, start laughing like, oh that was fire crackers. So we saw another guy walk up. I like, what happened back there? He like, T-Bone's been shot. T-Bone name is Anthony Williams. I like, for real? So we waited, you know, because we didn't believe it. Then ambulance came out. Oh, he was shot. So we went to the store, bought some top papers, went back to my house. We sat on my porch, smoke some marijuana. That next day was Sunday. We had a little get together with some of my closest friends and family. You know, just small little gathering. We smoked reefer, drank a little beer.

[00:01:33] **Alnoraindus Burton** About 4:00 in the morning, I was asleep and I heard a boom, a loud explosion. So I jumped up and the door, back door collapsed, had an big apartment in my mother's basement. I heard people yelling, get down, get down. So, you know, it was a few of us there. Me, my friend Anthony, my friend Theodore. My cousin Shawn was there but she went upstairs, she left. And her friend, they call her Shawn too, I think her name is Shandra. And one more of my other friends, I think I did say Anthony Williams.

[00:02:10] **Alnoraindus Burton** Anyway, we all got down. Somebody put they knee in my back. He told me, face the floor. I faced the floor, they turned the lights on. And somebody asked me my name. I told him my name. They said, yeah you're the one that we looking for. And they put the handcuffs on me. They start searching everywhere and, you know, police and detectives everywhere. So they asked me, where's my clothes? I say on a chair by my bed. So they got my things. I seen them take Anthony Smith and Michael Watson and Elmore Theodore out the back way. They took me up the stairs, into the kitchen, into the living room. I seen police shaking down my attic, searching the

rooms, the closet, the pantries, bathroom, going up and down up in the attic. And when I got into the living room, I seen my family all sitting in one place. They all huddled up and the police had his gun drawn like had them hostage in in front of them. All I had on was my boxer briefs. And my mother like, well, why is you arresting him? Where's he going? You know, where's the warrant for him? Police told my mother, we don't need a warrant, you know. So my mother, like, well I'm going to the police station where y'all taking him. So one of the police like if you try we're going to arrest you for obstructing justice. My mother was like, she still want to go. So they was taking me outside. My mother like, at least put him on some clothes, put him on some clothes. So they seeing my mother wasn't going to give that up, I'm standing on the front porch with just my boxer drawers and they put my pants on me and let me step, like slip, into my shoes. They took, threw my coat like like a towel over both sides of my shoulders, over to them and took me and put me in the car. I sat in the car for about maybe 15, 20 minutes.

[00:04:08] **Alnoraindus Burton** They took us to Area 3, 39th and California. They put me in a room, handcuffed me to ring in a wall. All the officers came in, they high fiving each other, you know, celebrating, we got him, this and that, this and that. So the big redhead guy I now know is John Burge came into the room, you know, and they all kind of got quiet and he asked me, where's the gun. I like, what gun? I don't know what you're talking about. He said, well, who was with you? You know, who shot this guy? I like, I don't know what you're talking about. So he said, well, we got something for you. And then when he went to the back of the police station, open up all the windows, told the other detectives, come one and he told them take the pants that I had on and my shoes. So now I'm sitting in my boxer drawers again. It was freezing. It was cool. I didn't think they was going to leave them windows open like that.

[00:05:11] **Alnoraindus Burton** You know, they left, the questioning and started. Every 30 minutes, or 25, 30, 35 minutes apart, two would come in. It wasn't no threatening me at this time, wasn't no cursing. You know, just asked me what happened on this day. And I told them just like I was just saying. Me and one of my friends went to purchase a bag of marijuana. We heard a gunshot and we ran. We got to the corner stopped, just like I was just explaining. So, yeah. Oh, no, no. We want to know where's the gun, this and that. But the question went on and on and on and on. So I'm asking them, am I being arrested for this? They wouldn't tell me this. I asked, well I'm requesting an attorney be appointed to me because if y'all question me, I want to see this. Nothing. So the questioning kept going on going on. On the 23rd, that night or early morning, I told my I'm not answering no questions no more til y'all appoint me an attorney or let me talk to my family because they also refused to let me call, get a phone call.

[00:06:16] **Alnoraindus Burton** About 2:30, maybe 2:00, 2:30, detective Kill and three more detectives came into the room and he well, we're going to kick your ass. We're not playing with you. You nigger, this and that. You're gonna tell us what happened. I'm like, I don't know what are you talking about. I don't know what happened. So he opened up a drawer and pulled a phone book, started slapping me, hitting me with the phone book. This hand was handcuffed to the ring in the wall. All I could do is cover up with the other hand. The two detectives pulled me by my legs out the chair and was stretching me out while he was beaten me. I didn't. It seemed like it was forever. You know, I'm talking about, I'm yelling out in pain. I defecated myself, you know. And when they got through, you know, they started laughing, you literally beat the shit out that nigger, you know.

[00:07:16] **Alnoraindus Burton** So. They left out the room. The questioning started back. Constantly constantly constantly. Day and no sleep. And can I have something to eat? Can I wash my feces off? Can I call? Can I have an attorney? They was like, well first you got to tell us where the gun at. Tell us who was with you, who did what. I said, man, I don't know nothing about this stuff. All I know is I went to buy a pack of marijuana.

[00:07:58] **Alnoraindus Burton** So of course it continued and continued. Like man, I'm not answering no more questions again. You know, get me an attorney. So on the 28th, detective Kill, detective Kelly, and John Burge came into the room. He asked me, you refusing to talk? I said, Man, I don't even know what you're talking about. I don't know what to talk about. All I know is I went to buy some marijuana. So, John Burge asked, what's taking so long to get his confession? And he said, well, we'll get it before the day is over, you know.

[00:08:43] **Alnoraindus Burton** At the time I see detective Kelly reaching between the wall and the lockup, you know, the space right there. And he was like fondling around for something. So. When I heard him say we'll get it before the day over, I'm looking at him, but I'm also watching Kelly, I mean, Kill because this the one hitting me with the phone book early. So I don't want to take my eyes off him, but I'm seeing this guy reaching, messing around in the corner. But when he say, we'll get it before the day over, what's taking so long? I stopped and looked and I seen him walk past, I felt like an explosion through my body. It's like everything turned white. All I could is yell out. When I turned to look, it was this hand I saw it could've been a flashlight, it could've been a pipe. I don't know cause he had his hand over the top of it. And it was about, maybe about this long, and it was all black. He hit me across my hand, so I tried to throw this hand over it, you know, instinctively. You know, you're in pain you're gonna try to shield yourself. When I

saw his hand coming down, I tried to throw this hand on it. He whacked me across this one. I yelled out again, so I jumped up to try and shield my hands with my body. He like I should crack your fucking nigga. That's when detective Kill, he got to hitting me, you know, swinging and hitting me.

[00:10:08] **Alnoraindus Burton** So I was trying to like bend down to cover my face up cause I didn't want to get hit in the head. So he, I don't know how exactly was. But his forearm was under my throat and he was pressing down on my head and my head was bent down. So I couldn't breathe. And it instantly cut my breath off. And I'm trying to tell him I couldn't breathe, but I couldn't not come out and I start panicking so I'm trying to snatch his hands off away from around my neck. And it's like my eyes was finna pop out my head. And next thing you know, I was out of there. When I came back, I was on the floor hanging from the ring in the wall and my throat was burning. I had a headache, a throbbing headache. It's just, I thought my neck was broke. I just felt pain in my neck. So I didn't want to look up at them because I don't want to sight them, didn't want to get beat me up some more. So I just held my head down. He like, when we come back, you nigger, you gone confess to this murder of Anthony Watkins. I'm like, in my mind all the questions been about Anthony Williams. Anthony Watkins? But I know these two guys, they from my neighborhood.

[00:11:37] **Alnoraindus Burton** So they left. About 30 minutes, give or take, about 30 minutes detective Kill and Kelly came back with a piece of paper and he slammed it on the desk and put his pen down and told me to sign it. You know, I glanced down at it and I seen something about shooting Anthony Watkins and dumping his body. Oh, no, I'm not signing that. You know. So I told him, I'm not signing that. You know, they got to beating me up. Beating me up. So I try to cover up some more. He grabbed me by my throat again, put his two fingers in my throat. You know, my man, I'm saying I'm not signing that. But it's easy to say what you're not gonna do when you're not getting tortured. And, you know, he like, I'mma killer you, nigger, you're gonna die. And I literally thought I was gonna die, this day.

[00:12:36] **Alnoraindus Burton** You know, and I tried to fight his hand off me. So Kelly got to pulling my hand away. Holding my hand away. So when I got the feeling getting dizzy like I was that first time, I like, I tell you what, I sign what you want me to sign, I do what you want me to do, but I couldn't, you know, I was, that's what I was meaning to say but nothing was coming out. I just could nod my head. So he let me go. I like, alright I sign. I signed it. He told me, OK. Read it over. I read it. Not this the first time I'm reading this. Now he tell me, it's saying that we kidnaped this guy off the block and drove him in a car

and dumped him in an alley and shot him in his head and all this stuff and told me to remember it. Either detective Kelly was there or Kill was there or they both was there. And we went over it all that night. They told me on the 29th that the state's attorney would come. And this is when we tell the state's attorney, I supposed to tell this to the state's attorney.

[00:13:35] **Alnoraindus Burton** About twelve o'clock that night, a little bit after twelve, they came into the interrogation room where I was being held. They like, well, come on, gave me my clothes. Took me into the bathroom and let me wash my drawers out in the toilet stall, you know, clean up in the toilet stall. Took me back into the room. Took me over to a statement a couple more times. Then he said, OK. You cool until she come, just stay here, don't worry about it. So they shut the door. You know, all I could do is, man, you know, man they made me confess to a crime that I didn't do. You know? That's the only thing that kept going through my mind over and over and over and over. How could I testify to, I mean sign a statement to a crime that I didn't do.

[00:14:28] **Alnoraindus Burton** About 1 o'clock, the state's attorney came in. He came into the room by himself at first and told me, Mr. Burton, I like yeah, he like, well, my name is Timothy Frenzer and I'm the state's attorney and I work for the city, the state, and I'm working with the Chicago police. Detective Kill and Kelly told me you wanted to confess to the murder of Anthony Watkins. I said, man, they beat me, they made me sign that. I said, man, my hands hurt, you know, my scrotum hurt, they been kicking me and hitting me. He just walked out the room, came back in with detective Kill and Kelly asked me again, detective Kill and Kelly said, you want to make a confession? Do you want to make a confession? Detective Kill was standing in front of me and Kelly was standing right here.

[00:15:18] **Alnoraindus Burton** I like, man, this guy. I don't know if he's going to let them beat me up some more or what. But for him to walk outta there after I'm telling him that these guys beat me up like this, and he didn't even... like it was no concern to him. He just walked outta there. Came back and then gone ask me the same question again, like, you better say yeah this time. You know, that's what I got from it. So I told him, yeah, I want to make a confession. So I got the starting of what I remember. Even though I didn't want to give it, you know. And plus I generally did forgot it. I like man, I don't remember. So detective Kill and Kelly stepped in and they gave the confession. He never asked me another question. He never even looked in my direction. He just continued writing as they spoke. They even added stuff to it.

[00:16:12] **Alnoraindus Burton** So at the end, he like, I want you to sign this and push the statement in front of me. I like, man, let me talk to an attorney first, I'm not going to sign this til I talk to an attorney. He walked right out the room. Detectives Kill and Kelly, I knew it was coming, they walked up on me, I try to ball up with my one hand, with my knee up. They just got to hitting me, kicking me, hitting me. So only thing I could do, I said to myself, I'mma scream loud as I can until somebody come. I try to scream as loud as I can for help.

[00:16:43] **Alnoraindus Burton** I'm looking down, so all I seen was somebody reaching to they pants leg. Any he said, I'm tired of this nigga, and pulled out a gun, a chrome gun with a light brown handle. Look, I don't know what kind of gun it was, and put it up to my head. All I could say is, whoa, you see what I'm saying. So I backed against the wall. But he put it up to my head and grabbed me by my cheeks and forced my mouth open and put the gun in my mouth. Like I was choking. All I could do is, God please don't let this man kill me. I said, I'll sign it man, I'll sign it. So I signed it. The state's attorney wasn't even in the room. I signed it. Kelly went out and got him, he came in. He said, well I want you to initial here, here, here, here. So that's what I did. Then he left the room, all three of them. Yeah. So about maybe about an hour. They came back in the room, Kill and Kelly and the state's attorney.

[00:17:46] **Alnoraindus Burton** He like, he wasn't more or less talking to me but he was talking to them. He said we have to rewrite Mr. Burton's statement. So he sat down and he had, I'm looking at my codefendant, Michael Washington's confession. And he's looking at that one, writing on this one, you know, and he rewrote the state, the second confession using my co-defendants confession and told me at the end, well, sign this. I did have anymore fight in me. I couldn't even act like I was gonna not do it. So I signed it. He's like, well, Mr. Burton, you're being charged with first degree murder and you'll be going to court tomorrow, and left.

[00:18:34] **Alnoraindus Burton** Ever since then, I didn't quite know exactly what was happening to me, I've had like real bad depression moments, like I wanted to kill myself. I was having reoccurring thoughts, nightmares all the time. I didn't know what it was at first. I hated myself. I hated other people. I didn't trust nobody. Nobody. I didn't know what it what it was over the time.

[00:19:16] **Alnoraindus Burton** At one point, I was taken to seg [segregation] back in 2000, I think it was early 2002 for my [indiscernible]. And while I was in seg, I was strip search, which is a requirement by segregation and a correctional officer did it. You know,

and it's like I was living that moment again. That's all I remember in 2002. When I remember after that, it was 2005, I was in the mental health unit. I didn't know how I got there. I didn't know what I did. And I asked, where am I at? How long I got in the seg? They like, well you got. I think at the time it was like 17, 18 years of segregation. How did I get that? I don't even remember any of that. And it scared me because nothing like that ever happened to me before.

[00:20:34] **Alnoraindus Burton** I was taking psychotropic medication. It was scary. Because I would still have those flashes from what I've been through. I was interrogated six days and nights. Never stop, never stop. I never ate anything. They never let me use the bathroom. I sat in my own feces.

[00:21:26] **Alnoraindus Burton** Those thoughts kept coming to me over and over until one day I just needed to talk to somebody to explain what was happening, so I spoke to the psych doctor. He say, well, that's PTSD. I didn't understand it, but I was given medication for it. And, you know, now I'm not having nightmares like I used to, not as often as I used to. But I can never forget what happened to me. My life was changed that night. Not to mention, I'm serving the rest of my natural life, plus 15 years for a crime that I didn't do, that I couldn't have did if if you look at the records.

[00:22:26] **Alnoraindus Burton** The records saying this guy was killed on the 28th. I was already in the police station on the 23rd. No one wants to look at that. And I've been trying to tell all of the court-appointed attorneys, look at the records. I couldn't have did that. All you gotta do is look at the record, listen to their testimonies. Now I'm finding out that the transcripts from the motion hearings was altered, not even a part of my appellate record. Not even a part of anything. So I was never even given a hearing on this, but they telling me that I can't now raise the issue because of procedural bar default, I should've raised it or could've raised it.

[00:23:15] **Alnoraindus Burton** The attorney that represented me on direct appeal, Mr. Manuel Serritos, I told him about where's the records of my testimony. He like, well, I'm gonna look. He said he was going to subpoena it, but he wrote in a statement of facts in his motion, I mean, on this brief that transcripts from certain procedures are missing, including my motion to suppress my confession. But my post [post-conviction appeal] was denied. So when all of this information came out again in 2006, Egan [Cook County Special Prosecutor, retired Justice Edward Egan] issued his report. I filed a post-conviction, a successive post, arguing my coerced confession claimed. He sent me a letter back saying he can't raise this because there's nothing in the record stating that I

ever gave a confession nor presented documents or evidence or anything that I was ever beaten and tortured. Nothing. So he filed a motion, a Finley motion to dismiss, because he said that I had no claim with no merits.

[00:24:27] **Alnoraindus Burton** I wrote him back. I even sent a copy. Thank God, my mother, before she passed just last year. That woman. Right after my motion hearing, sometime I don't even know when, she got a copy of my transcripts from my motion hearing, my October the 26th motion hearing to suppress my confession cause she knew them detectives lie. And not just that. The documents that were submitted, my bruise sheet and medical cards, it had a letter that the L on it and then somebody tried to scratch it out and make it an R. So they all try to alter all medical records saying, oh, it wasn't his left hand that was broken, it was his right hand. My right hand was never broken. X-ray approved that. I even asked my attorneys to get an X-ray and you'll see my right hand was never broken. I don't have a deformed bone from the break in my right hand, it's my left hand. So that showed that they altered the records.

[00:25:36] **Alnoraindus Burton** My mother got a copy of the transcript with all of the original testimonies, the evidence put in it, documents presented, my testimony and all of this. She had it all these years in the attic. And I was telling her, we need to find these records. So I found out the date that I had the motion here, because going through trial, I wasn't all the way there. A lot of that I didn't remember. So I spent a lot of time trying to... I knew I testified, but I don't know, I didn't know what date I did. I knew it was a hearing. So I kept telling my mother. So I remember October 26 now. So she told me, she said, well, we're gonna try to buy these transcripts. I tried to buy the transcripts, and they said the court reported that took those records was either deceased or wasn't able to find the records or they weren't able to find the records. So my mother, she forgot that she even had these transcripts in the attic and she had a leak in her attic and went to clean up with everybody and found out, I got some of yours in the attic, some transcripts, and I don't remember ever sending her no transcripts.

[00:26:55] **Alnoraindus Burton** So I told her to send them to me and she sent them to me. And it was the transcripts from October 26, 1990, pretrial motion hearing to suppress my confession where all of the testimonies from the interrogating detectives denying that they ever beat me or tortured me, my testimony giving limited detail because my public defender only wanted to focus on my hand because they said, well, then it's not going to be believable that you was ever a gun was put in your mouth or you was sitting in your own feces or sitting in a cold room. So we're gonna stick with what we what we can prove. So every time I try to even speak on that, he object to it. In transcripts.



[00:27:54] **Alnoraindus Burton** The transcripts that I got from my appeal had nothing about, nothing about I was ever tortured, ever beaten, that my confession was ever coerced. Nothing. Not even Doris Reece, the medical examiner who completed my medical records. Not the public defender, Mary Dennehy, who gave testimony that she looked at my hands and saw my injuries and committed and completed a bruise record reflecting my injuries. Not even the police testimonies nor the opening rebuttal or closing arguments speaking about my confession. In fact, the only closing argument about that, I mean, a ruling that the Judge state, it states nothing about my that, my confession. Nothing about my injury was part of my coerced confession. Nothing. All of this was altered from my records.

[00:29:02] **Alnoraindus Burton** You know, and that's my question. I'm asking, I'm begging for somebody to look at this because you steady holding me for a crime that I didn't commit and every time I try to bring it up, you say that it was a procedural bar because either I could have raised it or should have raised it. It wasn't a part of the record. Until I filed, in 2014, April, I filed a pro se motion to a circuit court asking them to incorporate those transcripts into my record because they were vital evidence to my claim of coerced confession. Even now, part of this reparation packet--.

[00:29:47] **Amanda Rivkin** Has that been able to help you at all? Has there been any relief from that?

[00:29:50] **Alnoraindus Burton** No. And I was appointed. Judge Biebel had Jenner and Block appointed to the case, who in turn appoint Yusef Esat and Benjamin Bradford as attorneys. I told them about these transcripts, you know, because they came to me said, well they spoke to me on the telephone and told me, we're concerned that this case is going to be dismissed because of procedural bar. I said, well, because of the fact that these transcripts is not a part, nothing relating to my coerced confession is a part of my record. That's cause for the relaxed procedural bar.

[00:30:42] **Alnoraindus Burton** They like, well that's a good idea, we're going to bring this. But they never did. Then when I came to them again and I showed them the transcripts, the copies that I have, the proof that my official court record is altered. And I showed them the letters that Mr. Manual Serritos saying that, well that's not, there's none in your record about you was ever tortured. So the state filed a motion to dismiss. And his only argument that he file was that Judge Biebel had a discretionary duty to allow guys to file successive posts. And that's why he was there. But he don't mention anything about

the guidelines and the rules for successive post-conviction that's in concrete in the Illinois Supreme Court. So that that kills my only chance of even getting the issue heard.

[00:31:42] **Alnoraindus Burton** So I filed a motion to Judge William Hooks, who's representing the case, and I asked him, I filed a motion requesting that he clarification on whether my issue was adjudicated because there was no record ever presented on either the issue terms that I appealed, which Mr. Esat say, well his issue was adjudicated, it was adjudicated, the judge asked several times. By the appellate court it was adjudicated. So I filed a motion and I asked the court to clarify whether it was adjudicated. And I explained that these records, the testimonies, my testimonies, the exhibits, my medical records, none of these testimony, even the police officer's testimony denying that they ever beat and tortured me, none of this was part of the record when my issue was before the appellate court in 2014 when I filed a motion. So I know I can't have a motion in the court pro se and have an attorney represented. So I asked them to withdraw because I explained to them why. They finally filed a motion to withdraw.

[00:33:04] **Alnoraindus Burton** And I was supposed to have a court date on the 27th of last month, which was October. And the judge wasn't there, so it was continued to the 14th of November. Other than that, you know, I was never given a hearing. My issue was never even reviewed. And I went back to look at my briefs in my first post-conviction when I first brought up my torture confession in 1996. The judge, in his order, said that I was given of a full review of my issue because the record is complete, but none of that was ever a part of the record. Only thing was there was the state's attorney's testimony saying I gave a confession of my own free will after I was given my Miranda rights. And he asked me whether I want a court reporter or he to complete my confession, and I chose to have him complete my confession. That's the only thing. And the judge ruled it, saying that my confession was voluntarily given.

[00:34:34] **Amanda Rivkin** In what ways can you speak to the torture that left this sort of long mark on you? In what ways do you still feel connected or detached even from this experience? What sort of things guide you forward?

[00:34:55] **Alnoraindus Burton** I'm connected to this chain of torture because I'm a victim of. I could. I could never. I could never completely forget what I went through. It was horrible and as far as how did it affect me? It changed my life. How I look at people, how I trust people. I wouldn't have never thought Chicago police would ever do, any police would ever. Your job is to serve and protect, I would've never thought you'd threaten my life like this.

[00:36:01] **Alnoraindus Burton** I think people need to know what can happen, you know, because these people got some malicious thoughts, you know. I think this program is a necessity because as long as you got overzealous people, you gonna have a lot of crazy things happen.

[00:36:38] **Amanda Rivkin** What keeps you going forward every day? What kind of things do you tell yourself?

[00:36:39] **Alnoraindus Burton** What keep me going is my promise to my mother. I told her that... well, she always tell me, keep fighting, keep fighting, keep fighting, one day the truth gonna come out. I told her I would and she said, show me something, be something. My goal is I'm gonna keep fighting. And I just want people to see the truth. You know, all the facts, everything. And I want a lot of the detectives that took part in this, I want them to answer, you know, to why they did this. I want to get my life back and I want to do something, complete some of my dreams, my goals. That's what push me.

[00:38:03] **Amanda Rivkin** Thank you.