

Amnesty International Group 22 Pasadena/Caltech News

Volume XXII Number 8, August 2014

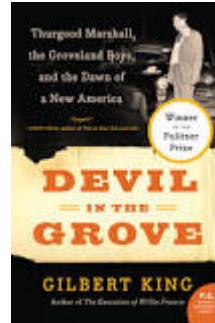
UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER BREAK: No Monthly Meeting Thursday August 28.

Tuesday, September 9, 7:30 PM. Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn behind the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty.

Sunday, September 21, 6:30 PM. Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "Devil in the Grove" by Gilbert King.

Thursday, September 25, 7:30 PM. Monthly meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. We will be planning our activities for the coming months. Please join us! Refreshments provided.



**Next Rights Readers meeting:
Sunday, Sep. 21, 6:30 PM
Vroman's Bookstore
695 E. Colorado, Pasadena**

Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America

Book Review

The news, when it came, was short and sweet. Standing on a Florida golf course last week, Gilbert King looked at his phone and saw a two-word text message from an old friend: "Dude. Pulitzer."

Casey Kelbaugh for The New York Times

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All

School started last week and it has been crazy! Hopefully things will settle down once we have filled the 13 open positions in our area!

Group 22 is now tabling regularly at the Pasadena Farmer's Market in Victory Park on Saturdays. Thanks to Alexi for arranging this. I'd forgotten what a great market this is-much better than the one in So Pas!

Our former Western Regional Coordinator, Kalaya'an Mendoza, was in Ferguson, Missouri, with an Amnesty team monitoring the situation. See the AI press release in this newsletter.

Con Cariño,
Kathy



Mr. King, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, with his dog, Louis.

Mr. King, much to his surprise, had just been declared the winner in the general nonfiction category for "Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America." The book, about four black men falsely accused of raping Norma Lee Padgett, a 17-year-old white woman in Groveland, Fla., in 1949, unearthed a largely forgotten chapter in the long history of racial injustice in the United States, and explored, in painstaking detail, the tactics used by Thurgood Marshall, the future Supreme Court justice, to chip away at the foundations of Jim Crow law.

Though Mr. King did not know it, his publisher, Harper Collins, had nominated the book, which beat out Katherine Boo's lavishly praised "Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity," winner of the

**RIGHTS READERS
Human Rights Book Discussion Group**

**Keep up with Rights Readers at
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>**

National Book Award in the same category in November. The other finalist was David George Haskell's "The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature," a sharp-focus examination of a square meter of old-growth forest in Tennessee.

"I'm sure people who write the big, critically acclaimed books know if they're in the running," Mr. King said during an interview in his small walk-up apartment on the Upper East Side, a few blocks from Gracie Mansion. "But I'd just gotten a notice from my publisher that the book had been remaindered."

Mr. King, an amateur historian, stumbled on the Groveland case while writing his first book, "The Execution of Willie Francis," another tale of racial injustice. Groveland "wasn't really covered in a lot of the Marshall biographies, which tend to treat his criminal cases as footnotes," he said. "His clerks knew all about it, though, because he always talked about it when he recalled the old days."

There was a lot to recall, most of it horrific. One of the accused men never made it to a courtroom. He was hunted down and shot to death by a hastily organized posse. Two others were shot by the local sheriff, Willis McCall, while being transported from state prison to the local jail for a hearing after their convictions were overturned by the Supreme Court. One died on the side of the road. The other survived.

Mr. King was able to reconstruct events, virtually day by day, after getting his hands on two troves of data. He gained access to the unedited files of the F.B.I., which sent investigators to Groveland to conduct interviews with local officials and police. He also convinced the N.A.A.C.P. to let him see the tightly controlled files of its Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The fund's directors, citing concerns about lawyer-client confidentiality, has been loath to grant access to the material even to eminent civil rights historians like Taylor Branch.

"I don't think anyone had seen those files for 20 years," Mr. King said. "But I just kept at it. I said, 'My focus is very narrow. I just want to look at this one case.'"

Mr. King was fortunate in his protagonists. Marshall, already assuming larger-than-life dimensions, was determined to see justice done but focused on cases that let him set legal precedents to dismantle segregation and Jim Crow. The public-relations value of the Groveland case was not lost on him, either.

Every good drama needs a villain. The Groveland case had a memorable one in McCall, a ruthless, brutal man who conducted a one-man reign of terror in Lake County. "He made Bull Connor look like Barney Fife," Mr. King said, referring to the notorious commissioner of public safety in Birmingham, Ala., during the civil rights era. "Connor used dogs and fire hoses. McCall actually killed people."

Mr. King traveled a winding professional road on the way to his Pulitzer. A native of Schenectady, N.Y., he attended the University of South Florida with the thought that he might make a career playing second base. That dream died when he got a look at some of the Dominican players the school had recruited.

After coming up two math credits short of a degree in English, he moved to New York and patched together a living doing freelance editing and ghostwriting. One project was a coffee-table book dedicated to antique bicycles.

While working for a publisher of medical magazines, he was asked to fill in and supervise a photo shoot in Puerto Rico. The work appealed to him. He learned to handle a camera, got into fashion photography, and picked up lots of jobs from foreign magazines that needed a man on the spot in New York.

His two books enjoyed only modest sales, and he is undecided what the next project might be. When the Pulitzer news came, "I was sort of lying low," he said. Three times a month he files offbeat historical stories for Past Imperfect, a blog on Smithsonian magazine's Web site. His topics have included the great Australian prison break of 1876 and, to coincide with the Masters tournament, the story of Craig Wood, the unluckiest golfer of all time.

It was while editing a crime encyclopedia that he found the subject of his first book. Willie Francis, a teenager convicted of murdering a white pharmacist in St. Martinville, La., in 1944 and sentenced to die in the electric chair. Because of a malfunction, Francis survived electrocution; a local lawyer, arguing that a second electrocution would be cruel and unusual punishment, took his case all the way to the Supreme Court.

Mr. King, a fan of Walter Mosley's historical crime novels, took full advantage of the setting, in the heart of Acadiana, to spin an atmospheric yarn around the facts. "It became a strange Cajun murder mystery," he said.

It ended badly. In 1947, weary of the legal battles being fought on his behalf, Willie Francis took his seat once again in the chair nicknamed Gruesome Gertie. There were no glitches the second time around.

In the case of the Groveland Four, Mr. King was able to track down some participants; the case still burns in local memory. When he returned to Groveland for a reading, the local librarian informed him that two threats had been phoned in. "Don't worry," she said, "we called the sheriff's office." Mr. King savored the moment.

One interview subject he saved for last: Norma Lee Padgett herself, who lived in a trailer at the end of a dirt road in rural Georgia. A relative answered the door of a second trailer on the property and acted as a go-between. The message he brought back to Mr. King was, "Let sleeping dogs lie."

Author Bio

Gilbert King is the author of *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2013. A *New York Times* bestseller, the book was also named runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize for non-fiction and was nominated for an Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime. King is originally from Schenectady, New York. He has written about Supreme Court history and the death penalty for the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and he is a featured contributor to *Smithsonian* magazine's history blog, *Past Imperfect*. His book, *The Execution of Willie Francis* was published in 2008. He lives in New York City with his wife, two daughters, and a French Bulldog named Louis.

AIUSA PRESS RELEASE AUGUST 18, 2014

Amnesty International USA Calls for Investigation of Police Tactics in Ferguson

Organization On the Ground in Ferguson Monitoring Policing of Protests

Contact: Amanda Simon, asimon@aiusa.org, 202.680.2866, @AIUSAmedia or Gabe Cahn, gabe@westendstrategy.com, 202.412.1678

(FERGUSON, MO) - As communities across the nation stand witness to the killing of an

unarmed African American teenager by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, Amnesty International USA was on the ground monitoring events. With the return of its human rights delegation from Ferguson, the organization today called for an investigation into police tactics used during protests.



Kalaya'an Mendoza, one of Amnesty's 13-person human rights delegation, on the ground in Ferguson (Photo Credit: Amnesty USA).

Amnesty International USA sent a 13-person human rights delegation, which included observers who monitored police and protester activity and sought meetings with officials. Other members of the delegation trained local activists in methods of non-violent protest. "Amnesty International has a long and tested history of monitoring and investigating police conduct, not just in foreign countries, but right here at home in the United States," said **Steven W. Hawkins, executive director of Amnesty International USA**. "Our delegation traveled to Missouri to let the authorities in Ferguson know that the world is watching. We want a thorough investigation into Michael Brown's death and the series of events that followed."

Amnesty International USA is calling for:

- A prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the shooting of Michael Brown. Brown's family must be kept informed throughout the investigation. Under international law, police officers suspected of having committed unlawful acts must be held to account through effective investigation, and where warranted, prosecuted.
- All police departments involved in policing the ongoing protests in Ferguson in response to Michael Brown's death must act in accordance with international human rights standards. Any human rights abuses in connection with the policing of protests must be independently and impartially

investigated, and those responsible held accountable.

- A thorough review of all trainings, policies and procedures with regards to the use of force and the policing of protests should be undertaken.

"Moving forward, we must seize this moment to bring about a wide-ranging review of all trainings, policies and procedures with regard to the use of force and the policing of protests in Ferguson and around the country," **added Hawkins**. "This is a moment for people around the country – and around the world - to join the Ferguson community in raising concerns about race and policing, and about the impact of militarization on our fundamental right to peacefully assemble."

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE
Gao Zhisheng
by Joyce Wolf

China did indeed release imprisoned human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng on August 7 as previously announced, but we don't have much cause for celebration.

We knew that China planned to place Gao Zhisheng under probation for one year after his release. Following the guidelines in Amnesty's updated case dossier, we have been writing to Chinese officials and urging that Gao "does not face any harassment or restrictions on his freedom of movement, speech and association after he is released from prison." However, it now appears that Gao's physical condition is a far more pressing concern than his civil rights.

Following is the August 13 media release from Jared Genser, who has been acting on behalf of Gao's wife Geng He. I don't want to dilute its impact by summarizing or paraphrasing, so I quote it in its entirety.

Washington, D.C.: On August 7, 2014, Chinese authorities released renowned Chinese human-rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng. He is now staying with his wife's sister in Xinjiang, under a round-the-clock watch by Chinese security officials.

Since his release, the family has now learned some terrible details about how he was treated in prison. From the time of his reappearance in Shaya prison in December

2011, Gao was held in a small cell, with minimal light, 24-7-365. Guards were strictly instructed not to speak with him. He was not allowed any reading materials, television, or access to anyone or anything. He was fed a single slice of bread and piece of cabbage, once a day; as a result, he has lost roughly 22.5 kg (50 pounds) and now weighs about 59 kg (130 pounds). He has lost many teeth from malnutrition. It is believed he was also repeatedly physically tortured.

Unfortunately, it is hard to get much more than basic information from him. Gao has been utterly destroyed. He can barely talk — and only in very short sentences — most of the time he mutters and is unintelligible. It is believed he is now suffering from a broad range of physical and mental health problems; he has not been allowed to see a doctor since his release.

After speaking with him and hearing from her family about Gao's immense suffering, Geng He commented: "I am completely devastated by what the Chinese government has done to my husband. The only thing I feared more than him being killed was his suffering relentless and horrific torture and being kept alive. My children and I have been lucky to have had the protection of the United States since we arrived here in March 2009. We desperately need help from our adopted country and from President Obama and Secretary Kerry personally to demand the Chinese government to allow my husband to come to the United States for medical treatment. If President Xi Jinping has any sense of decency or humanity, after crushing my husband both physically and psychologically, the least he could do is allow me as a devoted wife to care for him."

Gao's international lawyer Jared Genser further added: "I am heartbroken for Geng He and her family. We knew that if Gao wasn't killed, he would have suffered immensely. But the situation is far worse than my limited imagination enabled me to contemplate. While China is a great power in the 21st century, the inhumanity and brutality that it has demonstrated by the torture of Gao Zhisheng shows its profound insecurity and fear of anyone in its population who stands up to its repression."

<http://www.freedom-now.org/news/media-release-gao-zhisheng-tortured-in-custody-wife-pleads-for-u-s-help-to-get-him-urgent-medical-care/>

I suggest that we write immediately to all the Chinese officials on our list and express our dismay that Gao is being prevented from receiving the medical attention that he so

urgently requires. Remember to follow Amnesty guidelines and be polite and respectful.

http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/GaoPOC/Gao_Zhisheng_appeals.pdf

I received this on Aug. 24 from the AIUSA China Co-group:
Amnesty International posted their response to Gao Zhisheng's release on social media at the links below.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/amnestychinatime/posts/639851332778260>

Twitter (English):

<https://twitter.com/amnestychina/status/500474730122846208>

DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

“Certainly, from the standpoint of life and death, capital punishment is just as deadly a form of violence as murder - a man is just as dead if he is killed by the state as he is if killed by a murderer. Therefore, if we wish to learn more about the causes of violence in order to do a better job of preventing it, we need to study the violence of legal punishment.”

James Gilligan, MD

Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and Its Causes

Joseph Rudolph Wood III

The span from 1:52 PM to 3:49 PM. This is the length of time the drugs used for the State-sanctioned murder of Joseph Wood took to kill him July 23rd. Because many companies that sold the drugs we in the USA use for executions stopped selling them to us, our executioners have had to find other willing vendors, and drugs. Mr. Wood fought unsuccessfully in court for more information about the drugs that would be used to kill him. His final words were, “I take comfort knowing today my pain stops, and I said a prayer that on this or any other day you may find peace in all of your hearts and may God forgive you all.” Mr. Wood had been on death row for 23 years.

Whether Mr. Wood suffered or not is a matter of perception. Apparently, he was “gasping or snorting for more than an hour,” according to the public defender Jon M. Sands, or “There was

no gasping of air. There was snoring. He just laid there. It was quite peaceful,” according to Stephanie Grisham, the spokeswoman for the Attorney General’s office.

While Charles Ryan, the Arizona Department of Corrections director, said, “I am committed to a full, complete and transparent account of the events of inmate Wood’s execution,” Senator John McCain said, “I believe in the death penalty for certain crimes. But that is not an acceptable way of carrying it out. And the people who were responsible should be held accountable. The lethal injection needs to be indeed lethal injection and not the bollocks-upped situation that just prevailed. That’s torture.” In other words, let’s just get it right. And how might we do that? Well, Chief Judge Alex Kozinski of the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals said “lethal injection (is) a ‘dishonest’ attempt to disguise the brutal nature of capital punishment” and therefore “properly trained firing squads are a ‘foolproof’ way to quickly execute an inmate and avoid complications surrounding lethal injection.” Arizona Governor Jan Brewer was concerned about how long the execution took, but she said, “One thing is certain, however, inmate Wood died in a lawful manner and by eyewitness and medical accounts he did not suffer.” Some of the people in the comment threads following articles about this execution believe it was not ‘botched’ because, well, Mr. Wood is dead. Others thought any torture he may have experienced was appropriate because he was a murderer. And so it goes.

One thing that interests me is the second drug used in Mr. Wood’s execution. Hydromorphone has been used in two executions in 2014, Mr. Wood’s and Dennis McGuire’s January 16. At the time of Mr. McGuire’s execution, he was said to have ‘struggled, gasped for air.’ His execution took 25 minutes, the longest of the 53 executions in Ohio since the death penalty resumed 15 years ago. One of the prison guards said Mr. McGuire “faked” his “symptoms of distress.” I’m unsure how or why he could have done that. But when I looked up hydromorphone, the side effects included among others swelling or tingling in the mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing, and slow or shallow breathing. Perhaps Mr. McGuire and Mr. Wood suffered from the side effects of this drug. Mr. Wood received 50-milligram increments of hydromorphone 15 times between 1:53 PM and 3:49 PM for a total of

750 milligrams. These are the same drugs used for surgery and for a lengthy surgery, a patient receives no more than 2 milligrams each of midazolam and hydromophone. According to Mr. Wood's attorney, Dale Baich, "The Arizona execution protocol explicitly states that a prisoner will be executed using 50 milligrams of hydromorphone and 50 milligrams of midazolam." Obviously, something did not work as expected and went terribly wrong.

We are left with this concern: Was justice served?

Richard Brown, the brother-in-law of Debbie Dietz one of Mr. Wood's victims, said, "This man conducted a horrific murder and you guys are going, let's worry about the drugs. Why didn't they give him a bullet, why didn't we give him Drano?" Twenty-five years after Mr. Wood murdered Ms Dietz and 23 years after Mr. Wood was sentenced to die, Mr. Brown's and the other family members' pain and desire for revenge remain raw. I have to wonder if this prolonged, and perhaps painful, death of Joseph Rudolph Wood III, the former boyfriend of their loved one, will bring them the peace Mr. Wood wished for them with his final words.

Attorney General Kamala Harris

Despite personally opposing the death penalty, AG Kamala Harris said she will ask for the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn the ruling by US District Judge Cormac J. Carney. Last month, Judge Carney said the long delays in executing death row inmates and the uncertainty about whether or not inmates would, in fact, ever be executed violated the Constitution's ban on cruel or unusual punishment. Whatever the decision, it will affect all of California and other western states.

"Executions are shrouded in secrecy, masked, sanitized. If people could see the brutality of killing a human being, they might reconsider their support for the death penalty."

Sister Helen Prejean

Stays of execution

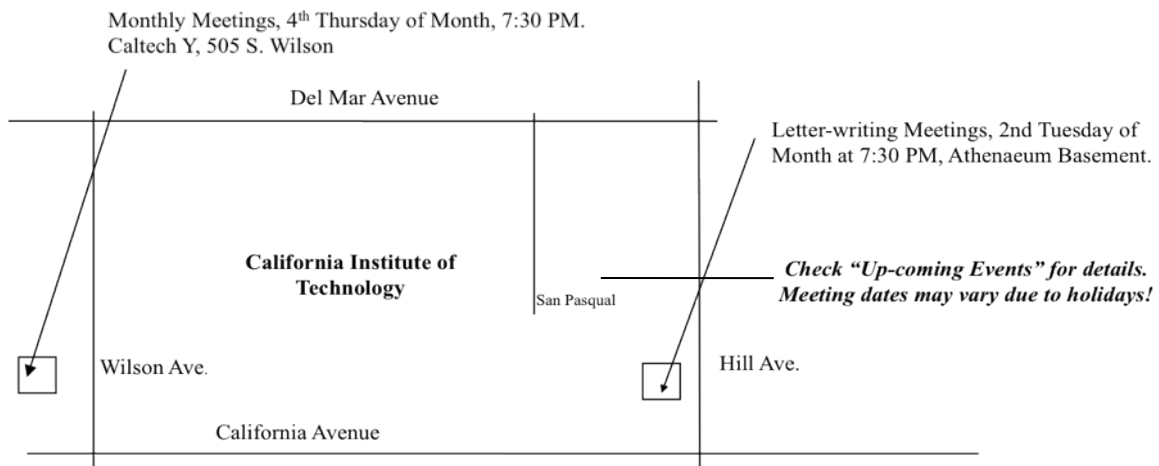
August		
6	William Montgomery	Ohio
6	Manuel Vasquez	Texas

Executions

July		
23	Joseph Wood	Arizona
	Lethal Injection	
	- midazolam + hydromorphone	

August		
6	Michael Worthington	Missouri
	Lethal Injection - pentobarbital	

GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT	
UAs	10
POC	8
Total	18
To add your letters to the total contact	
aigp22@caltech.edu	



From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar
 From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California
 Street parking is generally available.

Amnesty International Group 22
 The Caltech Y
 Mail Code C1-128
 Pasadena, CA 91125
www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



Amnesty International's mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.