

**CIVIL RIGHTS TRIAL ABOUT FATAL POLICE BEATING OF MARTIN COTTON
CONCLUDING THIS WEEK**

*****PRESS CONFERENCE ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT 21 2:30PM** Federal Bldg. 1301 Clay St.**

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Oakland, CA: The current civil rights trial in Oakland about the Eureka police murder of Martin Frederick Cotton II resumes Wednesday, 9/21. Four years ago, Martin was 26 years old, unarmed and living on the streets when he was killed by the Eureka Police when they pummeled his body in broad daylight, in front of a homeless shelter (Eureka Rescue Mission), then brought him to the jail to die. Cotton family supporters who are deeply opposed to police violence, rallied in front of the Oakland courthouse on the first day of trial (Sept 12) and have been present in the courtroom while attorneys Vicki Sarmiento and Dale Galipo represent Martin's six year old daughter, Siehna, and her grandfather, Martin Cotton Sr. The case, *Siehna Cotton et al v. City of Eureka* is being heard before U.S. District Court Judge Sandra Brown Armstrong and a seven person jury. Martin's story has spread beyond the "Redwood Curtain".

The fatal police beating occurred in front of many witnesses, mostly homeless people already in vulnerable situations. On August 9, 2007, two Eureka Police Department (EPD) officers responded to a call about a disturbance involving Martin at the Mission. When they arrived, Martin was no longer inside and was alone and defenseless when both officers immediately pepper-sprayed him, kned him to the ground and brutally beat him. Martin was passive, made no moves against the police and remained prone on the concrete. More officers arrived and joined the beating. Officers admitted at trial that they sat on Martin and forced his head onto the concrete throughout the beating, hit him with a metal baton and with their knees at vulnerable organs, kicked him, and deployed pepper spray three times.. The officers deny that any of them hammerfisted Martin in the head against the cement many times. Two unrelated civilian witnesses testified that they clearly saw head blows coming from the officers. One witness said he heard "fist-to-skull", "bone-on-bone" from very hard blows to Martin's head.

Marty Cotton, Sr. says, "We want to expose the truth, ideally, so those cops can never wear a badge and weaponry and never do this to anyone else again."

The names of the eight EPD officers involved in the deadly torture of Martin Cotton were never revealed by the mainstream media or local government, and only made public by Redwood Curtain CopWatch. The lawsuit is now only focused on three of the officers: EPD's Justin Winkle, Gary Whitmer, and Adam Laird (who has since been promoted to Sergeant).

The officers have testified and contradicted their attorney's arguments that Martin appeared to be a drugged up 'superman' requiring extreme force to be detained and questioned. The officers testified that they did *not* believe Martin was on drugs, that Martin reacted normally to the pepper spray, and that it was clear he had no weapons and was not trying to get away. One consistent observer of the trial said "The cops are claiming that they pepper-sprayed Martin, got on top of him and beat him repeatedly, even with a metal baton, just to get Martin's hands out from under him. It is absurd, or more accurately, obscene...and it killed him." Also, the officers testified that they did not think Martin was hurt and did nothing to get him checked out or treated -after "exhausting" themselves beating and spraying him. A video of Martin dying in the jail cell was shown at trial.

Support for the Cottons has been consistent at trial from the Oscar Grant Committee, Redwood Curtain CopWatch, and the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee.

Humboldt County officials and media fabricated facts and actively covered up the police murder of Martin Cotton for four years. There was no coroner's inquest or criminal prosecution for Martin's murder. The coroner and police fed the public outrageous theories, that Martin died of an LSD overdose, banged his own head to death in the jail, or died from 'excited delirium,' while witnesses spoke of a horrendous police beating. Martin's brutal murder was part of a killing spree by police in the Humboldt region from fall 2005 to fall 2007. Verbena of CopWatch says "There can never be 'justice' for Martin Cotton, but we hope this trial brings some peace to the Cotton family and has a deterrent effect on the cops, who regularly and viciously attack homeless people, and are increasingly more blatant and brutal with *all* of their targets- the people." ###