

**Daley accepts no responsibility for Burge torture cases**  
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BY FRAN SPIELMAN City Hall Reporter

Two years ago, Mayor Daley accepted his share of responsibility and offered to “apologize to anyone” for the torture of suspects by Jon Burge — even as he argued that the ultimate responsibility rests with the Chicago Police Department.

On Tuesday, the mayor changed his tune.

Hours after Burge was arrested in Florida and charged with perjury and obstruction of justice, Daley refused to accept even an ounce of responsibility for one of the ugliest chapters in the history of the Chicago Police Department.

Never mind that a \$ 7 million report by special prosecutors faulted Daley, who served as state’s attorney during the 1980’s, for failing to follow up on a 1982 letter from then-Police Supt. Richard Brzeczek that strongly suggested abuse in the case of accused cop killer Andrew Wilson.

“I was very proud of my role as prosecutor. I was not the mayor. I was not the police chief. I did not promote this man in the ’80’s,” Daley said Tuesday.

“Brzeczek ran against me in ’84. He was the head of the Police Department....The Police Department cleared him and they promoted him in the ’80’s. I was not the mayor then.”

Daley said there is “no room whatsoever for any type of torture” and he’s pleased that a “20-year-long” federal investigation of Burge has “finally” culminated in an indictment. Since Burge is facing criminal charges, it means Chicago taxpayers who have spent millions to defend Burge in civil cases will no longer have to pay his legal fees.

But the mayor said he feels no accountability whatsoever for Burge’s decades-long reign of terror.

“I just don’t...I was state’s attorney. I had 700, 800 prosecutors under me. It would be like [holding] you [accountable] for some of the headlines you write about me. I don’t hold you accountable... You can’t hold me responsible,” Daley said.

He added, "Looking back, you could do a lot of things [differently]. But you don't look back. You look forward."

In the 1982 letter, Brzeczek passed along explosive information he had received from Dr. John Raba, medical director of Cermak [Prison] Health Services.

Raba had examined Wilson and found: multiple bruises, swelling and abrasions on his face and head; a battered right eye; linear blisters on his thigh, cheek and chest "consistent with radiator burns." Raba also reported Wilson's claim that electric shock had been administered to his gums, lips and genitals.

"There must [be] a thorough investigation of this alleged brutality," Raba wrote.

Brzeczek tossed the political hot potato to Daley, who referred it to his Special Prosecutions Unit for further investigation. Nothing ever came of the investigation.

It wasn't until the early 1990's that the Police Board finally got around to firing Burge.

The mayor's response Tuesday was in sharp contrast to his contrite tone in July, 2006, when Daley was gearing up for his 2007 re-election campaign and was concerned the special prosecutor's report could come back to haunt him in the African-American community.

On that day, Daley accepted his share of responsibility for what he called "this shameful episode in our history....I'll take responsibility for it. I'll apologize to anyone....It should never have happened....Everybody should be held accountable...The system could have broken down."

But Daley categorically denied he deliberately looked the other way to avoid jeopardizing either his political ambitions or the prosecution of an accused cop killer.

"Do you think I would sit by, let anyone say that police brutality takes place, I know about it, that I had knowledge about it and I would allow it? Then you don't know my public career. You don't know what I stand for...I would not allow anything like this," the mayor said then.

On Tuesday, Daley was asked if the Burge nightmare could ever happen again. His answer was hardly reassuring.

“Anything could happen again. You try to do a lot of preventions...But individuals could do something outrageous any time,” the mayor said.

“We have good police officers. I know you want to beat them all up all the time. But we have good men and women in the Police Department,” he said, adding that “90.9 percent are hard-working men and women who want to do the job” the right way.