

## On Black Spaces: Death, Denial, Exorcism and Erasure

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The *US Senate Intelligence Committee Report on CIA Torture* and The Guardian's exposé of the Chicago Police Department's "off-the-books interrogation compound" at Homan Square, have again thrust torture into debates concerning the nature and limits of state and police violence. A number of historical and contemporary accounts illustrate how torture administered by state agents at so-called "black sites" is a long-standing and accepted practice of the American security state and thus no revelation, even to the uninformed public. In order to confront and contest similar patterns of facile outrage, this paper theorizes a cultural-cognitive process of denial and disavowal, whereby the horrific acts of the US state are willfully situated by its subjects in redacted *black spaces*—black markets, black operations, black sites. Operating on both symbolic and material landscapes, black spaces take shape as unmemorialized scenes of state violence, the interrogation rooms and cells of "black site" prisons and the intensely racialized, yet disowned spaces of a mass-carceral regime. The aim then, is to map the state's black spaces and to implicate the American public in the horrors it chooses to deny.

## **Endnotes**