

Baumgartner, POLI 203

Spring 2016

I am Troy Davis, part 1

Reading: I am Troy Davis, pp. 1-160

March 28, 2016

Troy Davis

- Chronology / timeline
- List of characters
- Relevant elements in the chronology and background
 - Savannah: 55% white, 38 % Black.
 - Cloverdale neighborhood:
 - <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Cloverdale-Savannah-GA.html>
 - Party on the “wrong side of town,” gang or other violence. From there to the pool hall / bus station.

Officer MacPhail down

- The crime, the lack of clarity not unusual
- The mobilization of the police force
- The confession is key

He who flips first, suffers least?

- Redd Coles as the informant

How to assess unreliable witnesses

- Boy scouts and church choir masters may not be at the pool hall / bus station at 1am on a Saturday morning
- Lots of people have criminal records, something to gain, a charge reduced, another benefit if they cooperate
- Not to mention, they may want to avoid being the target, stay on the “good side” of investigators. Motivated testimony is very common. You and I may not be motivated, but if you are “in the system” the police may have leverage over you or a loved one.

Possible tunnel vision

- Close the case
- Make someone pay
- Get an air-tight case that will lead to conviction
- Eyewitness testimony very compelling
- Confessions very helpful (none in this case)
- Recanting testimony later: perjury?
Trustworthiness easily questioned...

Troy's case exemplifies...

- Reversing an initial conviction very hard
- Lack of good attorneys, limited resources available for indigent defense
- Entire family goes down
- Terrible divisions in the community, as people divide based on trust in police / race
- If wrong person is convicted, true perpetrator gets away with murder...
- Compare to Darryl Hunt, very similar but Darryl avoided (by one vote) the death penalty.