

# "THEY TOLD ME I HAD TO BE STERILIZED OR DIE"

## RACIST DOCTORS TRY TO GIVE BLACK PANTHER PARTY COMRADE GENOCIDAL HYSTERECTOMY

Comrade Sister Lula Hudson, a member of the Black Panther Party, had been feeling very poorly for some time, and had been experiencing a great deal of pain in her lower abdomen. She had previously had trouble with infections in her reproductive organs, and it was decided that she should be hospitalized, before her condition grew worse.

Comrade Lula, whom her Comrades call "Smokey", was admitted to Moffitt Hospital, in San Francisco, on June 28th, 1972. Moffitt Hospital is a University of California teaching hospital. With a reputation among racists as one of the top ten hospitals in the country, Moffitt is, in reality, an experimental haven for "Dr. Frankenstein" personalities, who don't mind testing their theories on Black and oppressed people. What transpired while Comrade Smokey lay helpless in that hospital is a classic study in racism and Black Genocide. She was lied to, improperly diagnosed, harassed by the F.B.I., insulted and ignored by racist doctors and nurses, and finally, on July 6th, was almost rushed out of the hospital after being issued "clearance" for an early release. Comrades who went to visit Smokey at Moffitt Hospital brought back reports of the lack of concern and even open hostility exhibited by the hospital's staff towards Smokey, and all of the poor and oppressed patients there, in general.

The following is Comrade Smokey's personal account of the fascist ordeal to which she was subjected at Moffitt Hospital as told to the Black Panther Intercommunal News Service and Reporter Mel Knox (Note: The quoted conversations between Smokey and her doctor are documented on tape recordings.):

*The initial diagnosis I received at Moffitt, after I was examined by a Dr. George Melody and a couple of students, found that my uterus was retroverted to such a point as to be completely turned upside down, bound in that position by scar tissue as a result of having constant infections. Now, they also diagnosed, at the time, that at least the right tube and the right ovary were so badly diseased that antibiotics were no longer able to remove the infection; that they could only remove the surface symptoms of the infection; and that the infection itself was imbedded within*



*Comrade Smokey questioned the hospital as to the whole diagnosis; the alleged "necessity" of her having a complete hysterectomy, at 23 years of age.*

*the organs, so it was necessary, in order to stop the recurrence of the infections, to remove those organs completely.*

*Now, yesterday, when I talked with Dr. Donald Galen, who is the Chief Resident Gynecologist here, and who was supposed to perform the surgery, a complete hysterectomy, they were supposed to remove the uterus, the right (fallopian) tube, the right ovary, and possibly the left ovary. He said that he agreed with the original diagnosis; that the hysterectomy was necessary, and so forth and so on. Now, yesterday he suddenly reversed his decision and said that he had, in fact, not planned to do a hysterectomy, that he had planned to do exploratory surgery to find out if a hysterectomy were necessary. Also, yesterday morning, two members of the F.B.I. were escorted to this room by a member of the staff here, by a nurse here...*

*Dr. Galen came in to my room*

*right after that and said that my surgery had been rescheduled, earlier that morning. I had talked with him and we had already rescheduled the surgery for the 13th of this month. He came in and he said that this rescheduled surgery had been cancelled...*

*I told him that what you're saying is that you're not cancelling the surgery because of the visit from the F.B.I., you're cancelling it because of so-called indecisiveness on my part, which we had already discussed and we had come to an agreement on, that I was in agreement with the surgery as I understood it at that point. He then said, "Well, the hospital just doesn't want to get mixed up in the middle of anything like this. I don't know what affairs you have with the F.B.I., but we've been having a lot of strikes and we just don't want to get mixed up in the middle of this, and this extra time will give you time to straighten out your affairs."*

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## RACIST DOCTORS TRY TO GIVE BLACK PANTHER PARTY COMRADE GENOCIDAL HYSTERECTOMY.



DR. DONALD GALEN, Head Resident Gynecologist at Moffitt Hospital, is the racist doctor chiefly responsible for bringing misery to Comrade Smokey, and almost sterilization.

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It'll give you time to think it over and decide whether you really want to have the operation."...

I then asked him the name of his supervisor. I told him that I was certain that he was subordinate to someone here. He gave me the name of his supervisor, and I asked to see her, Dr. Carol Braga. She came down and acted as if she had no knowledge that the F.B.I. had been here. She "wasn't aware" of any of the morning's activities at all, whatsoever. So, I explained to her the situation, how the surgery had been cancelled, had then been rescheduled, and then, after the appearance of the F.B.I., had been cancelled again. So, after I had explained the entire situation to her, she said, "The surgery will be rescheduled on July the 13th, when you can come in and have the surgery done." From talking with her, I gathered that they were under the impression that the F.B.I. people were here in some connection with the hospital. This is supposedly the whole thing, that they didn't want the hospital to have anything to do with the F.B.I....

It was at this point that we started questioning them as to the whole diagnosis, as to the actual necessity of my having, at 23 years of age, a complete hysterectomy, and were there any alternatives to having that done. With this, they went into

a huddle. They had a meeting down at the end of the hall, and they became very reluctant to speak with us, to talk with us. I later asked to see Dr. Galen, again, who came in, and refused to talk because a tape recorder was on. Dr. Galen finally did say that all the doctors had agreed with the original diagnosis, but that he had not planned to do a hysterectomy, anyway; he had planned to do exploratory surgery... He then informed me that Dr. Braga, who is the Head of the Gynecology Department, and Dr. Ernest Page, who is the Chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department, would be along with him, and that they would be in tomorrow morning to examine me. Suddenly, they were "concerned". At that point, he said they would confer and "decide just what was best"... After they had already insisted hysterectomy was the only solution...

This morning (July 7th), then, Dr. Page and Dr. Braga came (and I might add that Dr. Galen has been removed from the case)... Dr. Page and Dr. Braga examined me this morning, and they said that they agreed with the original diagnosis also. But, Dr. Page also felt that at this time a hysterectomy may not be necessary; that "maybe there is some type of heat treatment" that I could have, that might help me. He says he's more of a conservative, he has a conservative opinion. He feels that

"we" should try this, "we" should try the heat treatment (pelvic short wave diathermy); to see whether this works or not. I asked him why wasn't this exposed to me before, why wasn't I made aware of this before, instead of just saying, well, you've got to have a hysterectomy. And he said, "...well, it's a matter of opinions"... He said then that he would need some time to observe me, and to find answers, because I had asked some questions as to, for example, how some of the symptoms that I had, like nausea, vomiting and so forth, were associated with the pelvic disease. He said that he couldn't answer that and that he would have to observe me for some time before he would be able to answer that...

Now they've discharged me from the hospital here. They discharged me today; they're getting the papers ready now, for me to sign to be discharged to leave this hospital. I'll be going to the very "exclusive" Samuel Merritt Hospital in Oakland, for the heat treatments. Suddenly, many closed avenues have been opened... Suddenly I have an alternative, where before I had none: "You have to get this hysterectomy, you have to have this taken out." Now they're saying that there is such a thing as these heat treatments that I could try. And I want to know why I couldn't try these things before. They were ready Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock to remove my tubes, my uterus, and my ovary. Now they're saying that this might not be necessary...

You see, this is a teaching institution and when students come here they're orientated to, from what I understand, a teaching, educational, patient care, in that order, hospital... I was going to be used so that they could observe. They had even told me that during the operation, there would be other people observing. At this point, I think this whole situation is going to have to be re-considered... Because it's as though they suddenly discovered that the heat treatments were available... I intend to see other doctors; I don't intend to accept this diagnosis, because I accepted the first one and you see what that turned out to be... I don't have very much faith in doctors.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE