

## Tribunal Statement

My investigation into Chinese organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience was essentially an accident. I had been writing about Chinese Communist Party (CCP) surveillance of Falun Gong practitioners and other dissidents since 2002, around the time I left Beijing to finish Losing the New China (Encounter Books, 2004). By 2005, I was thinking about my next book and my experience on the ground told me that Falun Gong was the biggest issue in China. Yet there was a gap in the existing literature. Research by Falun Gong practitioners was emotionally charged, while published writing by self-proclaimed “objective” outsiders overcompensated with undue formality, bias against spirituality, or avoiding actual witness accounts in favor of formulaic original research. That partially explains why I maintained a degree of skepticism about the first public organ harvesting allegations from both the Epoch Times and the Kilgour-Matas report, Bloody Harvest in 2006. Yet I was firmly convinced that a comprehensive account of the conflict between the Chinese State and Falun Gong was long overdue, and I began a lengthy interview process to fill that gap.

One of my very first interviews was in Toronto with three women who were fresh out of labor camp. Even in that early stage, I recognized that their stories were relatively routine - demonstrations at Tiananmen followed by capture, incarceration, and attempts to force practitioners to reject Falun Gong using torture, brainwashing, threats to the family, and humiliation. One of the women - call her Wang - was the least articulate but had a very appealing salt-of-the-earth quality. At one point Wang mentioned a “funny” physical exam. I asked her to explain. Wang did not consider the matter important and started to go on with her real story. I persisted - had she been hunger striking? No. Taking Medication? No. Was anyone else examined? Yes, other Falun Gong. What were the tests? A urine sample, a large blood test, an EKG, some tapping around the stomach and groin, x-rays, and then the doctor spent a lot of time shining a light into Wang’s eyes. Was there a peripheral vision test? No. Focus or reading test? No. No vision test, nothing involving actual sight? No. Test of ears, nose or throat? Genitals, reflexes? No. In fact, there was nothing that could constitute a proper physical examination. The tests were aimed at the health of her liver, kidneys, heart, and corneas - the major retail organs.

At no point did Wang seem to grasp the implications of what she was relating. Instead Wang was irritated at me, the stupid white guy who kept asking about some insignificant medical examination but didn’t understand the significance of her spiritual battle. While I didn’t believe at the time that Wang had been seriously considered as a candidate for organ harvesting - probably too old, I thought, although I would ultimately learn that I was wrong about that - I still remember feeling a chill as my comfortable cloak of skepticism fell away.

I mention Wang’s interview in detail for three reasons: First, Because there is nothing quite like the moment when it dawns on you that this thing might actually be true (and the converse of that is that none of the breakthrough interviews that followed - from Falun Gong refugees to Uyghur medical staff to Taiwanese surgeons - surprised me all that much). Second, because it indicates that my system was too conservative. After The Slaughter (Prometheus, 2014) was published, my subsequent research for Bloody Harvest/The Slaughter: an Update (ETAC, 2016; referred to as 2016 Update) indicated that China had made far greater strides in transplantation than we had understood at the time and by exploiting techniques such as ECMO, Wang’s organs were probably viable for transplant. Third, Wang’s interview became a rare and valuable benchmark for me: an interview free from bias.

Bias, the psychological effects of severe trauma, or even unconscious attempts to spin testimony to fit into an organ harvesting storyline was clearly a danger to my investigation. Yet it seemed equally absurd - and possibly even bigoted - for reporters, NGOs and

government investigators to simply regard all Falun Gong witness testimony (or Uyghur or Tibetan testimony for that matter) as having little value - essentially devaluing the currency to zero simply because there were counterfeit bills in circulation. So when it came to the 50-plus Falun Gong refugees from the “Laogai System” (labor camps, psychiatric centers, long-term detention centers and black jails) that I interviewed in three continents - my strategy was to avoid revealing any tripwires or special areas of interest such as organ harvesting to the witnesses and simply explain that I was writing a “comprehensive history of the conflict between the Chinese State and Falun Gong.” Then I had to live up to that representation by employing a kitchen-sink approach: Questions about their early spiritual background, how they got involved in Falun Gong, their first arrest, and the various tortures they suffered - these were all explored at length. These are subjects that most practitioners who had undergone severe trauma have a strong desire to talk about, but it also would acclimatize them to my demand for a level of detail that they were not accustomed to (The guards knocked you down? What color was the floor?) so that any questions about medical examinations or fellow practitioner disappearances would blend in seamlessly with my ongoing interest in their general physical and mental status throughout their narrative.

That was a highly demanding requirement for everyone involved; it meant time above all. Time to allow the witness to vent, to explore spirituality, to act out emotionally, or even to tell me what they thought I ought to know, rather than what they knew first-hand. And after all that, I would still be there, waiting for their story. This explains why most of my interviews went on for about four hours on average, and a handful of my interviews were carried out over two or three days. (I have made the tapes and notes for these interviews available to the Amnesty International Secretariat, the BBC, and many other press organizations that claimed to be skeptical of the organ harvesting issue. None of them accepted that challenge). In the process, I discovered eight unambiguous cases of Falun Gong refugees that had been tested for potential harvesting of their organs. Most of those cases are in chapter 8 of *The Slaughter* (although one could easily add the woman I have already spoken of, and Wang Yuzhi in chapter 6 to that list). The calculation of organ harvesting deaths based on that survey method of 50 practitioners is in the appendix.

A word about second-hand methodology - as a former business consultant in Beijing, I carry a deep-rooted distrust of Chinese official numbers. I used to advise my corporate clients that even if they are looking at tapioca production figures, mainland numbers are often coded political messages that barely reflect reality. I don't reject official numbers or methods of analysis that use them outright, but I instinctively look for other ways to get at the information, if only to serve as a point of comparison. The 2016 Update, which relies on the transplant volume accounts of individual hospitals - Sun Yat-sen in Guangzhou, Tianjin Central Hospital - rather than Beijing' so-called official numbers - this is one method. Another method is the witness survey method that I used in *The Slaughter*.

However, these sorts of estimates don't make much sense if there is no clear motivation by the Chinese State to carry out mass murder. And that is why I did not throw away interviews simply because the subject could shed no light on organ harvesting. Fully six of the chapters in *The Slaughter* have little to do with the “how” of organ harvesting, but are about the “why,” the motivations and the context: What was the appeal of Falun Gong? Why did the CCP target it? Coming from a non-violent spiritual movement, how did practitioners think about fighting back? What were the key moments of escalation, how did the struggle change over time? As I said in *The Slaughter*, organ harvesting, organ tourism, these are “toxic allegations,” and I believe in addressing the motivational question in full - money alone isn't quite enough, although the financial imperative is obvious in the Wang Lijun case (chapter 9) and throughout the *2016 Update*. What emerges is that the CCPs motivation for organ harvesting clearly changes over time: from simply carrying out an order to eliminate Falun

Gong, to a public and increasingly global struggle against a recalcitrant movement that will not convert, to a mass cover-up of two decades of organ harvesting crimes. Understanding those shifts requires a historical understanding of the CCP, yet it also calls out for a coherent narrative of the last two decades. It demands that we question the narrative that the Falun Gong persecution was an isolated event. The discovery that “Eastern Lightning” House Christians were also being tested for their organs emerged organically from the interviews with Fang Siyi and Jing Tian (chapter 8) yet organ harvesting of death-row prisoners began in the 1980s, and that is why I began to suspect that the Uyghurs were the first prisoners of conscience to be harvested and to look closely at the specific CCP reaction to the Ghulja Incident in 1997 (chapter 1) - and later, the specific challenges of the Tibetan resistance (chapter 8).

A word about anonymity: approximately half of the medical and law enforcement personnel that I quote in The Slaughter insisted on keeping their names and locations secret. Given that they have family in Xinjiang or in other areas of China that request must be respected. Sometimes going on the record can present problems as well; one of the key affirmations that organ harvesting of Falun Gong was taking place in a Mainland Chinese hospital was made by Dr. Ko Wen-je, a surgeon at National Taiwan University in 2008 (see first five pages of chapter 9). Yet Doctor Ko, when he became a candidate for mayor in the Autumn of 2014, tried to publicly deny his own account (I had kept all of our correspondence which you can see in the following video: <https://ethan-gutmann.com/ko-wen-je-interview/>). In October 2018, faced with the unchanged text of The Slaughter being published in Mandarin, Mayor Ko attempted to pit his credibility against mine in the Taipei courts; the Taiwanese prosecutor publicly declared two days later that Mayor Ko “had no case” (the phrase has much the same meaning in both Mandarin and English). China is powerful, and the international medical community is no stranger to its gravitational pull, but facts and documentation can prevail over time.

My final comment has to do with the relevance of the Tribunal’s work. While much of my work is historical analysis, my recent testimonies at Westminster (ETAC website) have related the following facts: Over the last 18 months, literally every Uyghur man, woman, and child - about 15 million people - have been blood and DNA tested, and that blood testing is compatible with tissue matching. As the press, and even the UN, has widely reported, there are now approximately one million Uyghurs in re-education camps. Finally, the first of nine planned crematoriums was completed in Urumqi in early 2018 and is apparently manned by 50 security guards.

My involvement in this investigation may have essentially been an accident yet having seen a glimpse into what I can only describe as a real-life hell, I cannot un-see it. And given Beijing’s determination to continue this medical practice, I will likely continue my work on this ongoing human rights catastrophe, this cold genocide - call it what you will - until the end of my life.

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