

Luis Goia - Interview

«At one stage I heard Pello Zubiria saying “Just kill me once and for all”»

On February 27, Luis Goia told the EGUNERO newspaper of his harsh five days under arrest. Luis Goia was member of the *Egunkaria* Board of Directors. This is an excerpt of this long, relaxed testimony.

How were you treated at the police station?

I wasn't hit, but I did directly witness torture. Inside the cell we were ordered to face the wall and they kept checking through the window in the cell door to make sure that we were doing what they said. I could hear shouts, blows and cries of pain from the next cell. “Didn't I tell you to face the wall?” And the blows started, “I'm going to kill you! I'm going to kill you!”. “So, d'you like it?” And the blows continued; they asked the same question again: “Didn't I tell you to face the wall?” And suddenly the pitiful voice saying “yes” and the blows stopped. But they started again almost immediately... The guy in the cell shouted “Bastards! Bastards! Sons of bitches!”, and the policeman kept repeating “Didn't I tell you to face the wall?”, it was as if they couldn't hear each other. The policeman continued to hit him: I got the feeling that they were holding him by the hair and hitting his head against the wall. I recognized Pello Zubiria's voice. I heard him say “Just kill me and get it over with if you've got the balls”. It was spine-chilling, really awful. At one stage I heard lots of noise around the cell, people and voices, and then silence. There were no more shouts. I suppose they must have taken him somewhere.

When were you able to see the others who had been arrested?

When they took me to Madrid and put me in a cell I immediately realised there were other prisoners; I wondered who they were but didn't see anyone until the next day. For two days I was in a cell with another person, both of us facing a different direction. We weren't allowed to open our eyes, or talk and neither of us dared even to whisper to each other. We slept on really uncomfortable small foam mattresses with our legs hanging over the end, not knowing who the other person was. I later learned that there had been two of them, Fermín Lazkano and Xavier Alegría. On the Tuesday almost all of us were able to talk to one another in Soto del Real, where we gradually pieced the events together. Joan Mari Torrealdai told us that they had stripped him to his underpants at one of the interviews, and that they had covered his head while a policeman hit him in the testicles with a ruler. Torrealdai was in a terrible state, I think they tortured him a lot. At one stage he considered challenging the police, doing himself in to end the nightmare.

When were you able to talk to one another?

I was with Martxelo on Tuesday morning, in the High Court cells. I saw the others in prison that same afternoon. Iñaki Uria and Xabier Oleaga were always kept apart. On the Tuesday when they took us to prison we were able to see them for an instant; they looked terrible, an obvious sign that they had been tortured, but we couldn't talk to them. From among those with whom we talked, I know that they put the bag over Martxelo's head twice, that they made him take his clothes off, that they also put the bag on Xavier Alegría. I don't think they actually hit Fermín Lazkano, but he did suffer psychological torture: he's got a brother in prison and it seems that his son had to visit him that same day; they told him that he should talk if he didn't want his nephew to be left out on the street.