



Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ROBERT CLARK EXONERATED BY DNA EVIDENCE AFTER 24 YEARS IN PRISON

Test results now identify the likely perpetrator and link him to two unsolved rapes

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New DNA test results secured by the Innocence Project of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law and the Georgia Innocence Project prove that Robert Clark of Atlanta is an innocent man. On Thursday, December 8, the Innocence Project anticipates that Robert Clark will have all charges dismissed and be released at a hearing before Judge Dorothy Robinson at the Cobb County Superior Courthouse at 2:00pm. Mr. Clark, his family members and attorneys will be available briefly for questions after the hearing.

Convicted at age 21, Mr. Clark has spent nearly 25 years in prison for the 1981 rape of an Atlanta woman. During his years in prison, his children grew up and his mother passed away. These results not only prove his innocence, but also identify the likely perpetrator, Floyd Antonio "Tony" Arnold, a known sex offender who has recently been linked to two previously unsolved rapes.

In July 1981, a woman was kidnapped and raped by an armed man who later fled in her car. She described her attacker as slightly taller than herself, approximately 5'7". A week later, Clark was spotted driving the victim's car and arrested, but not initially considered a suspect in the rape because of the disparity between him and the victim's description (Clark is over 6'1"). Clark told police he got the car from a friend, Tony Arnold, but the police made no attempt to investigate Arnold.

"Despite the fact that Robert was a head taller than the description, once the police locked in on him, it was all over," said Peter Neufeld, Co-Director of the Innocence Project. "The lead detective was so focused on him, that all other suspects, other incidents, or any discordant data failed to register. Tunnel vision not only cost Robert a quarter century of freedom, it enabled a serial rapist to assault at least three more victims."

At trial, Clark maintained that he was misidentified. He was the only suspect to appear in both the photo array and the live line-up. A defense witness testified that she saw Tony Arnold, who more closely resembled the description, driving a car matching the victim's Maroon Cutlass a few days after the rape. Tony Arnold, who was in jail on an unrelated burglary charge, was brought to court and identified by the witness. Nevertheless, Clark was convicted and sentenced to life plus 20 years in prison.

"For the fifth time, DNA has proven the innocence of a Georgia man wrongfully convicted because of a mistaken eyewitness identification," said Innocence Project staff attorney Vanessa Potkin. "This is a mistake that could and should have been prevented by diligent police work twenty four years ago."

After November 2005 DNA tests completed by Serological Research Institute excluded Clark, the Innocence Project immediately requested a CODIS DNA database search of the evidence. A match came back to Arnold, who has been in prison since 2003 on a cruelty to children conviction and was due to be released in January 2006.



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While Clark was wrongfully imprisoned, Arnold was free to commit other crimes, including a 1985 sodomy. In 2003, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation also matched Arnold to a previously unsolved 1993 Fulton County rape and a 1996 DeKalb County rape. As of November 2005, he had not been charged in either incident. The failure of law enforcement to charge Arnold for more than two years after they knew his DNA matched these other rapes should be investigated and remedied at once.

Supporting documents available at
www.innocenceproject.org/press/

MEDIA AVAILABILITIES: Thursday, December 8, 2005

9:30AM-12:30PM

**Family and Attorney Interview Availabilities/Photos of Robert Clark
The Law Offices of Michael Syrop, 271 Roswell Street, Marietta**

2:00 PM Hearing

**Cobb County Superior Courthouse: Courtroom of Judge Dorothy Robinson, 5th floor.
32 Waddell St., Marietta, GA**

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