

The Case

On November 20, 1994, there was a fire at 4504 Chestnut st. in Phila., Pa. The building where the fire occurred was an abandoned apartment building that was occupied by six homeless people. One of the occupants died in the fire. The other five occupants survived with minor injuries. When the surviving victims were asked who started the fire, they all agreed it had to have been a man they only knew as "Rick." They stated that they had a fight with him the night before, and he threatened to get revenge. Although they did not see who actually started the fire. The police reported that they showed the victims a group of photographs, which included my photo, from which I was identified as "Rick." When I was arrested, I was held for more than seventeen hours without access to crack-cocaine or medical treatment, as I suffered from crack withdrawal, after several years of addiction. I was interrogated for five hours suffering withdrawal and duress, which resulted in my signing a (false) confession. After a jury trial, on November 6, 1995, I was sentenced to be executed for the Arson/Murder.

Hidden Truths

My legal team discovered that the prosecutor lied, misrepresented facts, and hid some exculpatory evidence. The prosecutor suppressed that:

--In August 1993, approximately 15 months prior to the November 1994 fire for which I stand convicted of, a homeless squatter named Glenn Taylor was beaten to death at the very same building;

--The same people who later survived the fire were critical eyewitnesses in the Taylor murder case;

--The same detectives who investigated the Taylor murder case also investigated this arson/murder case;

--The witnesses had identified another man as "Rick" numerous times under oath in the Taylor murder case;

--The defendants from the Taylor case had threatened to have the witnesses killed if they did not stay quiet about the Taylor murder;

--The prosecution and the police were all aware of these threats and did not inform us;

--The witnesses testified against the defendants at the Taylor murder trial three days before the fire of my case;

--Another prosecution witness to the Taylor murder, who was not a victim of the fire in my case, was a victim of a strikingly similar arson after I was incarcerated;

--Numerous other fires had been intentionally set in that building in between the time of the Taylor murder case and this fatal fire;

--The prosecution knowingly presented false evidence that I engaged in a confrontation with the victims the day before the fire, for they were aware that the victims meant the "Rick" from the Taylor murder case

--They also made knowing false representation to the court when they asserted that the victims had told the police that the person they had fought with was included as a filler in the photographic arrays from the Taylor Murder investigation. There's no such record of that statement.

Also, the photo arrays from the Taylor murder investigation can not be found, and neither can the photo arrays from my case. If the Taylor murder investigation's photo arrays can not be found, then how was the police able to determine that I was a filler in that photo array and the likely suspect for this arson/murder. And how could I possibly be a likely suspect when the police knew full well that the victims stated they fought with a man called "Rick", and that they were referring to the "Rick" from the Taylor murder case, as the detectives investigated that case as well?

Hidden Truths (cont.)

Additionally, the prosecution did not disclose evidence of a witness from the Taylor murder case reporting to the police that she had been threatened with death if she cooperated with the investigation of Taylor's death. Less than four months after her testimony, the building where she was staying caught fire, and the fire marshal determined that the fire was deliberately set.

And, the prosecution also failed to mention that a witness testified that he was offered money to stop a witness from testifying in the Taylor murder case, and provided information on how to locate that witness.

My 2nd PCRA Petition detailing this wealth of exculpatory evidence has been recently denied (11/7/11), stating that it was untimely because my trial attorney was properly informed of this undisclosed information when the prosecutor stated at trial that, "the victims were witnesses to a murder in an unrelated case." After reading the highlighted synopsis I've provided here, I do not understand how anyone could agree that the Taylor murder case is unrelated to my case.

I'll provide details on how the confession is false in my next report.