

For Immediate Release – October 30, 2012

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Man framed for rape, murder of an 11-year-old girl sues Lake County

Officials conspired to wring false confession out of Juan Rivera, Jr. after days of abusive interrogation

**Press Conference @ 11 AM with Juan Rivera, friends & supporters
Northwestern University Law School, 375 E. Chicago Ave., 8th floor, Chicago**

Chicago, IL – A Lake County man wrongfully imprisoned for 20 years -- half his life -- following the 1992 rape and murder of an 11-year-old, filed suit today against current and former officers from Waukegan, Lake Forest, Buffalo Grove, and the Lake County Sheriff's Department for allegedly framing him for the crimes until DNA evidence exonerated him.

According to the Complaint, on the third straight day of abusive police interrogation, then-19-year-old Juan Rivera, Jr. suffered a mental breakdown, was diagnosed with "acute psychosis" by medical officials at the jail, and left hog-tied in a padded cell. On the fourth day, following over 24 hours of non-stop interrogation, Rivera signed a written confession to the crimes in English, even though he had great difficulty understanding spoken English, and almost no ability to read and write in the language.

As today's suit notes, police knew that Rivera "suffered from intellectual deficits and that he had a history of pronounced emotional problems that would render him especially vulnerable to their coercive techniques." At the time of the interrogation, Rivera's I.Q. score placed him in the lowest 10 percent of the population. In addition, he had a well-documented history of psychological and emotional problems, including previous suicide attempts, and he had received psychiatric care and medications to manage those problems.

During the interrogation, police allowed Rivera to sleep only four hours over four days, and then fed him details of the crime so that his false confession would appear legitimate. They not only had no physical evidence tying Rivera to the crime, they knew that he had been on a home-monitoring device as a result of a previous property crime, and thus was nowhere near the scene of the murder.

Rivera's suit contends that the interrogation exceeded all reasonable limits for police questioning and was completely out of bounds. According to the lawyers, the duration of Plaintiff's interrogation exceeded the length of almost all other interrogations in the United States that have been deemed impermissibly long, unconstitutionally coercive, and that have resulted in known false and demonstrably unreliable confessions.

DNA evidence would later show that Rivera was not the person who raped Staker, but as a recent *New York Times* profile recounted, Lake County prosecutors obstinately concocted a theory that the 11-year-old was sexually active with multiple partners, and hence had semen that didn't match Rivera's DNA.

On January 6, 2012, after a long legal battle led by Northwestern University School of Law's Center on Wrongful Convictions, Juan Rivera, Jr. walked out of prison a free man, having served half of his life in prison for a crime he did not commit.

Rivera, and his attorneys, Locke Bowman of the Roderick MacArthur Justice Center and Jon Loevy of Loevy and Loevy Attorneys at Law, will discuss the new suit at an 11 AM, Tuesday, October 30 press conference at Northwestern University's School of Law, 375 E. Chicago Avenue, 8th floor, Chicago.

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