

**IN THE COURT OF CLAIM OF THE
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

RONALD JONES,)	
)	
Claimant,)	No. _____
)	
5.)	Amount Claimed: Maximum
)	Compensation Allowable for
STATE OF ILLINOIS,)	Nearly Fourteen Years of Unjust
)	Imprisonment
Respondent.)	

COMPLAINT

Ronald Jones, by his undersigned attorneys, for his complaint against the State of Illinois pursuant to the Illinois Court of Claims Act, alleges as follows:

1. This is a claim for compensation for time unjustly served in prisons of the State of Illinois. Recovery is sought under 705 ILCS 505-8(c).

2. Claimant Ronald Jones (“Mr. Jones”) was imprisoned within the Illinois Department of Corrections for nearly fourteen years for the offenses of capital murder and aggravated criminal sexual assault – crimes he did not commit.

3. Mr. Jones was arrested by the Chicago Police on October 5, 1985 and, after a lengthy interrogation, was charged with the rape and murder of Debra Smith, which had occurred on the south side of Chicago in the early morning hours of March 10, 1985.

4. Mr. Jones was tried and convicted on July 17, 1989 following a jury trial in the Circuit Court of Cook County of the murder and aggravated criminal sexual assault of Debra Smith. People v. Jones, No. 85 C 12246 (Circuit Court of Cook County). On August 14, 1989, Mr. Jones was sentenced to 60 years imprisonment on the aggravated criminal sexual assault conviction. For the murder conviction, Mr. Jones was given the death sentence.

5. Mr. Jones was imprisoned pursuant to these sentences from October 5, 1985 until

May 17, 1999, when he was discharged from the custody of the State of Illinois as a result of DNA evidence showing that he was not the person who had committed the crimes, as more fully explained below.

6. In January 1997, the Illinois Supreme Court entered an order requiring that DNA testing be performed on semen that had been recovered from Ms. Smith's vagina and rectum in the investigation of her sexual assault and murder. The DNA analysis that was performed pursuant to this order showed that Mr. Jones could not have been the donor of the semen deposited in Ms. Smith by her attacker. Once this evidence was presented to the Supreme Court, that court entered an order vacating Mr. Jones's conviction and remanding the case to the Circuit Court.

7. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office then conducted an extensive reinvestigation of the crimes for which Mr. Jones was convicted. At the conclusion of that investigation, the State's Attorney concluded that there was not a basis to proceed further against Mr. Jones. On May 17, 1999, the State requested that the murder and aggravated sexual assault charges against Mr. Jones be dismissed. The Circuit Court granted the State's motion to nolle prosequere the charges.

8. On November 19, 1999, Mr. Jones filed a Petition for Executive Clemency on the ground of his actual innocence of the aggravated criminal sexual assault and murder of Debra Smith. A copy of that Petition, minus the exhibits, is attached hereto as Ex. A. Mr. Jones's Petition was heard by the Prisoner Review Board in January 2000. On June 15, 2000, Governor George Ryan issued a Pardon Based Upon Innocence to Mr. Jones, formally recognizing Mr. Jones's innocence of the crimes for which he was wrongfully convicted in case number 85 C 12246. Mr. Jones's Pardon Based Upon Innocence is attached hereto as Ex. B.

9. Section 8(c) of the Illinois Court of Claims Act provides that a person who has unjustly served time in the prisons of the State of Illinois and who has received a pardon from the Governor stating that the pardon is issued on the ground of innocence of the crime for which the claimant was imprisoned is entitled to compensation. Mr Jones was unjustly imprisoned for nearly fourteen years and is therefore entitled to compensation under Section 8(c) of the Act and to an award of attorneys fees.

10. No assignment or transfer of Mr. Jones's claim to compensation under the Act has been made. Mr. Jones is justly entitled to the amounts claimed from the State of Illinois in this complaint after allowing all just credits. Mr. Jones believes the facts stated in this complaint to be true. No claim arising out of the facts alleged herein has been previously presented to any person, corporation or tribunal.

WHEREFORE, Mr. Jones prays that this Court enter judgment in his favor and against the State of Illinois in the maximum amount allowable for nearly fourteen years of unjust imprisonment, plus attorneys fees, plus such additional and further relief as this Court may deem equitable and just.

Respectfully submitted,

RONALD JONES

By: _____
One of his attorneys

Locke E. Bowman
MacArthur Justice Center
University of Chicago Law School
1111 East 60th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637
(773) 753-4405

Richard E. Cunningham
3445 N. Janssen
Chicago, Illinois 60657
(773) 472-0096