

# The MacArthur Justice Center

Northwestern University  
School of Law  
375 East Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

phone 312-503-1016  
fax 312-503-1272

## *Legal Director*

Locke E. Bowman  
312-503-0844

[l-bowman@law.northwestern.edu](mailto:l-bowman@law.northwestern.edu)

## *Lecturer and Trial Attorney*

Joseph Margulies  
312-503-0890

[j-margulies@law.northwestern.edu](mailto:j-margulies@law.northwestern.edu)

## *Board of Directors*

Solange MacArthur  
John R. MacArthur  
James Liggett

**For immediate release**

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For more information:

Nora Ferrell, 312-408-2580 x24,  
773-510-4819 (cell)  
Valerie Denney Communications

## **Man Coerced Into False Confession Files Suit Against Chicago Police**

***Police Officers and Assistant State's Attorney  
Falsified Evidence, Manipulated Witness and Conspired To  
Wrongfully Convict Innocent Man, According to Lawsuit***

CHICAGO—Attorneys representing Robert Wilson, a man who spent nine years in prison for a crime he did not commit, filed a lawsuit against Chicago Police Officers and an Assistant State's Attorney today seeking monetary damages.

According to the suit, the officers and the Assistant State's Attorney conspired at nearly every step of the process to convict Wilson for the crime of attacking a woman, June Siler, with a box cutter despite the fact that there was no evidence connecting him to the crime.

“Robert Wilson is a victim of police who would rather get one conviction than take the time and effort to conduct an honest investigation,” said Wilson's Attorney Locke Bowman of the MacArthur Justice Center. “Because of the police officers' and the assistant state's attorney's complete disregard for his rights, Robert lost nine years of his freedom for a crime he didn't commit.”

Wilson was arrested on March 1, 1997, for the attack on Siler while waiting for the bus on the South Side of Chicago. The officers detained Wilson for 30 hours despite the fact that he continued to maintain his innocence. According to the lawsuit, the officers then beat Wilson up, denied Wilson his blood pressure medication, threatened him, and promised leniency if he confessed. Finally, an exhausted Wilson signed a confession the Assistant State's Attorney wrote for him. Many of the details of that confession conflicted with Siler's account, according to the suit. There was no video or audio record made of Wilson's interrogation or confession.

After getting Wilson's confession, the police then allegedly manipulated Siler into positively identifying Wilson as her attacker. According to the lawsuit, Siler was not sure that Wilson was her attacker until police officers used a number of tactics to convince her that he was.

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Meanwhile, another man, Jerryco Wagner, went on to attack a number of other women with a box cutter in the weeks following Wilson's arrest and was eventually charged for these attacks. However, Wilson's attorney was barred from introducing evidence about Wagner and the striking similarities between his crimes and Siler's attack during Wilson's trial.

"If the police officers had been doing their job, Wagner might have been stopped before he attacked five more women," said Bowman. "Evidence of Wagner's other attacks came to light during Robert's trial, but the officers and the assistant state's attorney chose to look the other way."

During his trial, the Wilson family tried to show Siler pictures of Wagner as well. Siler wanted to see the photos, but the Assistant State's Attorney assigned to prosecute Wilson refused to let Siler see the photos and told her that there was no connection between Wagner and her case, according to the lawsuit.

Despite the fact that there was no physical evidence connecting Wilson to the crime, only Wilson's confession and Siler's identification, Wilson was convicted of attempted murder and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

After being convicted, Wilson spent nine years in prison and was finally exonerated in November 2006. Siler has since identified Wagner as her attacker and has apologized to Wilson for her manipulated testimony.

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