

STATE APPELLATE DEFENDER OFFICE

DAWN VAN HOEK
DIRECTOR

JONATHAN SACKS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

www.sado.org
Client calls: 313.256.9822



MAIN OFFICE:
PENOBSCOT BLDG., STE 3300
645 GRISWOLD
DETROIT, MI 48226-4281
Phone: 313.256.9833 • Fax: 313.965.0372

LANSING AREA:
Phone: 517.334.6069 • Fax: 517.334.6987

Media Release
November 19, 2012

Contact: Christine Pagac
(313) 256-9833
cpagac@sado.org

SADO CLIENT JAMES GRISSOM RELEASED FROM PRISON AFTER NINE YEARS

Persistent investigation and advocacy by an appellate defense team at the State Appellate Defender Office (SADO) led to an extraordinary result in a 2003 case that sent Mr. James Grissom to prison for 15 to 35 years for the sexual assault of Sara Ylen.

On November 19, 2012, the St. Clair County Court granted the prosecutor's motion to dismiss all charges against James Grissom. In its motion, the prosecutor stated, "[t]here is no longer any reasonable likelihood of conviction in this case due to newly discovered evidence, particularly in light of evidence recently disclosed to the people. In light of the time served by the Defendant at this point, it does not serve the interests of justice to pursue prosecution of this case further." Mr. Grissom, who has been incarcerated since his arrest in this case in March, 2003 left court a free man with no charges pending.

The Michigan Supreme Court held in July, 2012 that newly discovered evidence of suspicious sexual assault complaints could support the grant of a new trial. The Court remanded the case to the trial court for further findings. According to St. Clair Circuit Court Judge Cynthia Lane, the newly discovered evidence showed that the complainant made "as few as one and as many as nine" false allegations of sexual assault. Judge Lane found:

Simply put, the newly discovered evidence places in serious doubt whether the complainant was sexually assaulted at all. In this regard, the Court is struck by the eerie similarities between the sexual assault the complainant reported here and the final (and third) version of the sexual assault she reported to Fresno police on October 1, 2001. Both alleged incidents involved allegations of rape that occurred in a parking lot, between two vehicles, in the middle of the day, to which there were no eye witnesses; in neither instance was definitive physical evidence obtained because the complainant did not seek immediate medical treatment; and in both instances the complainant stated her attacker penetrated her with a foreign object, his finger, and ultimately his penis. This evidence, as well as the other newly discovered evidence is believable, because it tends to make the complainant's testimony about the Meijer assault unbelievable – and thus tends to prove the defendant's innocence.

On November 7, 2012, the Michigan Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's order granting a new trial, and Mr. Grissom has now been released. According to the Port Huron Times Herald, complainant Sara Ylen is under investigation for fraud and filing a false police report in separate matters.

State Appellate Defender Office Assistant Defender Christine Pagac and Chief Investigator Linda Borus successfully represented Mr. Grissom.