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<http://www.norfolk4.com/>

Prosecutor Drops Charges Against Derek Tice, One of the Norfolk Four Attorneys Call on VA Officials to Vacate Convictions of All Four Innocent Navy Men

(Norfolk, VA) At a hearing in Norfolk Circuit Court today, D.J. Hansen, Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney, City of Chesapeake, dismissed the charges against Derek Tice, one of three innocent Navy men who served 11 years in prison for a rape-murder they did not commit. (The fourth innocent sailor, Eric Wilson, served 8½ years after being convicted of the rape.)

Prosecutors rarely dismiss a criminal case, but the evidence is overwhelming that Mr. Tice and the three other men, Danial Williams, Joseph Dick, and Eric Wilson, were innocent of the crime for which they were wrongfully convicted.

“The dismissal of charges against Mr. Tice underscores his innocence and the grave injustice that was done to the Norfolk Four. If there is no case against Mr. Tice, then there can be no case against Mr. Dick, Mr. Williams or Mr. Wilson,” said George Kendall, attorney at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey who provides pro bono representation to Mr. Dick.

In 2009, then-Governor Tim Kaine granted conditional pardons for three of the Navy veterans but left their wrongful convictions intact. In 2010, Robert Glenn Ford, the lead detective in the Norfolk Four case whose coercive, unconstitutional interrogation tactics led to the conviction of the innocent men, was convicted of corruption, taking bribes, and lying to the FBI.

“The Norfolk Four, their families, and the citizens of the Commonwealth have waited far too long for justice to be served. Virginia authorities should concede that their convictions are invalid, dismiss the charges against each of them, and allow these innocent men to rebuild their lives,” said Don Salzman, attorney at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom who provides pro bono representation to Mr. Williams.

The Norfolk Four are out of prison, but they are not free. The former sailors have trouble securing good jobs, live under harsh parole conditions, and must register as sex offenders, even though they received conditional pardons and are completely innocent.

Some of the harsh conditions include wearing an ankle bracelet and being subject to GPS monitoring 24 hours a day, not being able to visit family and friends who live near schools, and living under strict curfews.

Only one man, Omar Ballard, committed this crime. He confessed and stated he acted alone. He is serving a life sentence in prison. Only his DNA and confession matched the crime scene. DNA

and other forensic evidence at the crime scene excluded Mr. Tice, Mr. Dick, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Wilson.

“We believe the Commonwealth has a duty to vacate the convictions of the Norfolk Four and finally correct this unimaginable injustice,” said Stephen Northup of Troutman Sanders who provides pro bono representation to Mr. Wilson.

More information about the Norfolk Four case can be found at: www.NorfolkFour.com.

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