



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
P. DAVID SOARES
6 LODGE STREET
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12207
(518) 487-5460
(518) 487-5093 FAX

CONTACT: CECILIA WALSH (518) 275-4710
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JULY 7, 2016

DA's Office Dismisses Murder Charges After New Evidence Surfaces in 1997 Case

ALBANY, NY- District Attorney P. David Soares announced today that two men who were previously convicted of a 1997 murder appeared in Albany County Court today after new evidence has surfaced in relation to the crime. At the proceedings today, the Court vacated the previous trial convictions and the People dismissed the murder charges on the newly re-instated indictment.

On February 18, 1997, Erik Mitchell was shot and killed inside of his Clinton Avenue apartment in the City of Albany. An investigation conducted by the Albany Police Department led to the arrest and conviction of CARL H. DUKES and LAVELLE R. JONES, who were each found guilty after separate jury trials of (1) Count of Murder in the Second Degree, a Class A-I Felony, and other charges. In 1999, the men were each sentenced to Life in State Prison in Albany County Court, and have been in custody serving the sentence since that time.

In late August 2014, a person named JEFFREY CONRAD, now 53, formerly of Albany and various other locations, was arrested for an unrelated murder in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. During the investigation of that murder, CONRAD made statements to the Police Department in Ohio implicating himself as the shooter in the 1997 murder of Erik Mitchell in Albany, NY. The Police Department in Ohio contacted the Albany Police Department and advised them of this new evidence.

"As soon as the newly discovered evidence was brought to our attention we sought to ensure that the Constitutional rights of Mr. Dukes and Mr. Jones were protected, and it was at our insistence

that they were appointed new defense counsel to be adequately represented in the matter," commented DA David Soares.

DUKES and JONES, now represented by new defense counsel, appeared before the Honorable Judge Thomas A. Breslin in Albany County Supreme Court this morning. The People joined in a defense motion that the introduction of new evidence in the matter warranted that the conviction of DUKES and JONES be set aside, and revert the case back to the indictment stage. The People then moved to dismiss portions of the newly re-instated indictment in the interest of justice.

DUKES, now 39, and JONES, now 38, then each pleaded guilty to a single count of Robbery in the First Degree, for their roles in an October 1996 forcible robbery in a residence on Clinton Avenue in the City of Albany. They were immediately sentenced to a maximum of 14 years, which has already been served in State Prison. They were remanded to the custody of the Department of Corrections and will be scheduled for release.

JEFFREY CONRAD was found guilty in Ohio's Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court for the August 2014 murder of his former girlfriend and faces other charges in Ohio for unrelated crimes. At this time CONRAD has not been charged in New York for any new crimes, including for the murder of Erik Mitchell. As such, the case has been re-opened and continues to be an open homicide investigation.

Chief Assistant District Attorney David Rossi is overseeing the case.

For more information please contact Cecilia Walsh (518) 275-4710 or Cecilia.Walsh@albanycounty.com

###