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On Friday, September 30, 2016, Mark Maxson filed a Wrongful Conviction lawsuit in Federal Court against four Chicago Police Detectives and the City of Chicago. Maxson was released on Tuesday, September 27, 2016 after spending 24 1/2 years in state custody. Maxson's lawsuit alleges that the detectives involved in his coerced confession were William Marley, Angelo Pesavento, James Dwyer and John Duffy. All such detectives worked for years with the now disgraced former Commander Jon Burge. On June 28, 2010, Burge was convicted of Federal Perjury and Obstruction of Justice charges and given a maximum 5 year sentence for falsely denying that he participated in, was aware of, and supervised, police torture. The complaint further alleges that the City of Chicago is liable for a pattern and practice of allowing and concealing police torture which has resulted in many wrongful convictions and ultimately, exonerations. Maxson's lawsuit alleges that for decades, police, prosecutors and public officials were fully aware of this pattern and practice of violence and injustice towards mostly the African-American community and did nothing whatsoever to stop it.

At his trial 25 years ago, State experts testified that blood and pubic hair samples found on the 6 year old victim, Lindsey Murdock, *did not match* either the victim or Maxson. Yet, Maxson was convicted solely on the basis of a court reported statement which he *refused to sign*. Further, Maxson, after being allowed to make corrections, added that he was giving blood and hair samples "*in order to clear myself.*" Maxson's lawyers, Elliot R. Zinger and Larry M. Dreyfus, after moving the case to a new courtroom, filed a post conviction on Maxson's behalf and fought to obtain DNA testing for their client. Judge Thaddeus L. Wilson, who ultimately signed the order releasing Maxson, granted the defense request for DNA testing and expedited the process. Ultimately, the new DNA testing revealed that the blood of one Osborne Wade was on the child's clothing. Defense investigation has since revealed that Wade lived several hundred feet away from the abandoned garage where the victim's body was discovered. Further, the defense discovered that Wade, 2 years after Murdock's murder, stabbed and killed a relative and was sentenced to 22 years. Wade has since confessed to the murder of Murdock and has written letters of apology to the victim's family and to Maxson. Judge James Brown, who presided over Wade's bond hearing, called the case the worst tragedy he's seen in 14 years on the bench. Maxson's lawsuit seeks 36 million dollars in compensatory damages and 18 million dollars in punitive damages. "The average citizen in America could not even begin to imagine what it was like for an African American man to live in the penitentiary for 25 years branded as a child murderer and as a child rapist," Zinger said. "But it will be our job to educate them."

A press conference discussing the lawsuit will be held outside the Federal Building, 219 South Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois, at 3:00 pm., on Monday October 3, 2016.

