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March 6, 2019

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Man who spent nearly 30 years in prison for murder he did not commit sues Baltimore police

Today, a Baltimore-area man who was wrongfully incarcerated for almost 30 years filed a federal lawsuit against former homicide detectives with the Baltimore Police Department for suppressing evidence of his innocence in order to implicate him in a murder he did not commit.

Jerome Johnson was 20 years old in October 1988 when he was arrested and charged with murder. Mr. Johnson always maintained his innocence. At last, in July 2018, he was fully exonerated after a reinvestigation by the Conviction Integrity Unit of the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. Mr. Johnson is the second longest-serving exoneree in Maryland history, having spent a total of 10,886 days behind bars.

Mr. Johnson's federal lawsuit, against the Baltimore Police Department and four homicide detectives who investigated the 1988 murder, alleges that the detectives concealed an initial, exculpatory statement by the State's star witness. A police report setting out that statement, taken minutes after the murder, confirmed that Mr. Johnson was not involved. But the jury never heard of that statement. Instead, it heard only the witness's later version of the murder, which was the only evidence implicating Mr. Johnson. The lawsuit also alleges that the detectives pressured the witness to alter her story and that the detectives falsified police reports and knowingly misled the jury and judge at the criminal trial, all to secure Mr. Johnson's wrongful conviction. And it alleges that these wrongdoings were part of a pattern and practice of behavior condoned by the Baltimore Police Department.

"I spent so much of my life in prison for something I didn't do. We can't go back and change the past, but I hope that there is justice at the end of this road," said Mr. Johnson.

"Mr. Johnson was robbed of the prime of his life. While nothing in the world can give Mr. Johnson that time back, the police officers who violated his rights and are responsible for his wrongful conviction should be held accountable. We look forward to getting some measure of justice for Mr. Johnson for all that he has endured," said Kobie A. Flowers of Brown, Goldstein, & Levy, LLP, an attorney for Mr. Johnson.

The lawsuit is *Jerome Johnson v. Baltimore Police Department, et al.*, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Mr. Johnson is represented in his federal lawsuit by a team of attorneys at Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP and Forster & LeCompte.