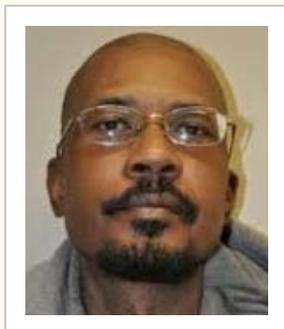




QUENTIN CARTER

Other Michigan Child Sex Abuse Exonerations



In September 1991, 16-year-old Quentin Carter was charged with raping a 10-year-old girl in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The girl's mother waited 10 days to take her to the police after the girl said three males, including Carter, dragged her from her porch and raped her. By that time, there was no biological evidence to collect, but injuries from a severe beating were still quite visible. During questioning,

Aurelias Marshall, the boyfriend of the girl's mother, admitted that he had beaten the girl with an extension cord to get her to identify her attackers.

Carter was tried as an adult in Kent County Circuit Court and was convicted on the testimony of the victim. The girl told a jury that Carter held her down while others assaulted her and then he raped her himself. By that time, Marshall had pled guilty to first-degree child abuse and been sent to prison.

Before the trial, Marshall, from prison, told Carter that he would testify on Carter's behalf and say that Carter was not involved. But when Marshall was brought to court, he refused to testify.

Carter denied the attack. He was given a polygraph (lie detector) examination before trial and the polygraph examiner said Carter was truthful when he denied any role in the attack. The results, however, were inadmissible in evidence and never disclosed at trial.

In February 1992, the jury convicted Carter and he was sentenced to six to 20 years in prison. He was repeatedly denied parole because he refused to admit that he had committed the crime. Ultimately, Carter served nearly 17 years before he was released in 2008.

In 2014, the Kent County Prosecutor's Office re-opened an investigation of the June 11, 1990 murder of Joel Battaglia in Grand Rapids. During the investigation—which focused on Marshall—investigators questioned the victim in the rape case, who by then was in her 30's. She told them that she had been raped by Marshall rather than Carter, and that Marshall later beat her until she agreed to falsely accuse Carter of committing the rape along with two fictional accomplices.

The victim told police that she had been sexually assaulted by

State: Michigan
County: Kent
Most Serious Crime: Child Sex Abuse

Additional Convictions:

Reported Crime Date: 1991
Convicted: 1992
Exonerated: 2015
Sentence: 6 to 20 years
Race: Black
Sex: Male
Age: 16

Contributing Factors: Perjury or False Accusation

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?: No

her stepfather at age seven (he was convicted and imprisoned) and by a relative at age 13 (the relative was removed from her home).

She said that Carter was chosen at random when his name was found on a piece of paper in the garbage outside a neighborhood home. She later said in an interview with the media that she had spent much of her childhood locked in a room while her mother and various boyfriends smoked crack. Even if the door was not locked, she frequently urinated in her room for fear of going out into the hallway if Marshall was in the house.

She also said that on two occasions over the years after Carter's conviction, she went to the Prosecutor's Office to try to tell them that she had lied, but no one believed her.

Investigators interviewed the victim's mother, who admitted that she knew at the time that Marshall was the real rapist and that he beat the victim in order to get her to identify someone else.

In December 2014, 56-year-old Marshall was charged with the murder of Battaglia.

On June 8, 2015, Marshall was convicted of that murder by a Kent County Circuit Court jury.

After the conviction, the Prosecutor's Office disclosed that Marshall was the rapist and that Carter was innocent.

Prosecuting Attorney William Forsyth filed a motion to vacate and dismiss Carter's conviction. "The evil perpetrated by Marshall...did not end with the 1990 murder of Joel Battaglia," Forsyth said in a statement. "After becoming aware of the evidence that potentially exonerated Mr. Carter, both the detectives and the assigned prosecutor spent countless hours reinvestigating the case against him."

Forsyth said that Marshall forced the 10-year old victim to accuse Carter of raping her "by physically and psychologically abusing her." Forsyth said Marshall might have targeted Carter because Carter owed him money for a drug debt.

On June 25, 2015, Carter's conviction was vacated and the charge was dismissed.

– *Maurice Possley*

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