



Morris S. Jones

In October 1997, Brodan Ware, a college student, was shot and seriously injured in Dallas, Texas. Witnesses told police the gunman drove away in a red Geo Prism with three others. An hour later, police stopped 16-year-old Morris Jones and his two friends, who were driving a red Mitsubishi. The three were brought to the scene of the murder and shown to witnesses, but none of the witnesses identified them as the shooter or his friends. Jones was released.

Though no one had identified Jones at the scene, Ware and a bystander later picked him out of a photo lineup. Almost two months after the crime, Jones was arrested for the shooting and tried as an adult. Ware said that the shooting was a continuation of a confrontation with Jones that had occurred several months earlier, but Jones claimed the earlier incident never happened. At trial, Ware and the bystander identified Jones as the shooter. The other witnesses to the shooting could not be located. In 1998, a jury convicted Jones of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and he was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Following Jones's conviction, his appellate attorneys and an investigator located two witnesses who authorities had been unable to find before trial. One of these witnesses said that a man named DeSoto was the gunman. The witness passed a polygraph test. Jones filed a habeas corpus petition on the basis of newly discovered evidence that established his innocence. He was released on bond in February 2001, after a Dallas County District Court judge recommended that his conviction be overturned. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals followed the judge's recommendation and overturned Jones's conviction in June 2001. The prosecution then dropped the charges.

Jones filed for compensation under Texas law for the years he was incarcerated. His application was denied. Jones appealed administratively, but that appeal was also denied. A later civil suit was dismissed because Jones had originally sought compensation through the administrative process, and thus could not pursue compensation through the courts.

- *Stephanie Denzel*

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State: Texas

County: Dallas

Most Serious Crime: Assault

Additional Convictions:

Reported Crime Date: 1997

Convicted: 1998

Exonerated: 2001

Sentence: 15 years

Race: Don't Know

Sex: Male

Age: 16

Contributing Factors: Mistaken Witness ID

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration? No
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