



Michael VonAllmen

On October 10, 1982, a 22-year-old woman was abducted at gunpoint outside a tavern in Louisville, taken to a nearby park where she was beaten, raped and robbed.

The victim described her assailant as about 5 feet, 11 inches tall, weighing more than 200 pounds and with blue eyes and curly dark- brown hair.

VonAllmen came under suspicion after a tipster gave police two license plate numbers that may have been the attacker's vehicle. The numbers checked out to a vehicle belonging to VonAllmen as well as a neighbor's car. Police put VonAllmen's photo in a photo lineup and the victim identified him as her attacker.

At trial in 1982, VonAllmen presented three witnesses who said he was at a party that night and drove one of them home. Further, the jury was told that VonAllmen has brown eyes and the victim said her attacker had blue eyes.

On the strength of the victim's identification, VonAllmen, 24, was convicted and sentenced to 35 years in prison.

After he was convicted, he persuaded prosecutors to be allowed to take a polygraph test and did so twice and passed. The results were so favorable that Louisville Police Chief Richard Dotson wrote a letter on his behalf to the parole board.

VonAllmen was paroled in 1994, but later contacted the Kentucky Innocence Project for help in clearing his name. Attorney Ted Shouse turned up evidence that a man who closely resembled VonAllmen had been charged with a very similar rape in 1978.

In that instance, Ronald Tackett, a convicted felon who died in 1983 after a high-speed chase with police, had been charged with abducting a 16-year-old girl from a gas station in the same neighborhood and taking the victim to the same park where she was beaten, raped and robbed. The victim's description in that case was five feet, nine inches tall, weighing more than 200 pounds with curly, dark-brown hair—virtually identical to the description given by the victim in the 1981 rape. Tackett was convicted of misdemeanor assault in that case after the victim declined to testify.

On June 4, 2010, Jefferson County Circuit Judge Charles Cunningham set aside VonAllmen's convictions. "The real bad guy got away from us," Cunningham said of Tackett. "I wish he were around so we could deal with that, but he's not."

The charges were dismissed a month later.

In June 2011, VonAllmen filed a wrongful conviction lawsuit alleging that police induced the victim to identify him by falsely telling her that VonAllmen had been identified by five or six other women as assaulting them and that they were too fearful to come forward. That allegation was based on a

State: Kentucky

County: Jefferson

Most Serious Crime: Sexual Assault

Additional Convictions: Robbery

Reported Crime Date: 1981

Convicted: 1982

Exonerated: 2010

Sentence: 35 years

Race: Caucasian

Sex: Male

Age: 24

Contributing Factors: Mistaken Witness ID

Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration? No

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statement made by the victim's husband after VonAllmen's conviction had been set aside.

– *Maurice Possley*

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