

Man cleared in '90 murder, rape sues Chicago police

By Jeff Coen

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A man who spent more than 12 years in prison before DNA testing cleared him of rape and murder charges has sued Chicago police, saying he was forced to confess falsely to the 1990 slaying of Kathy Morgan on the South Side.

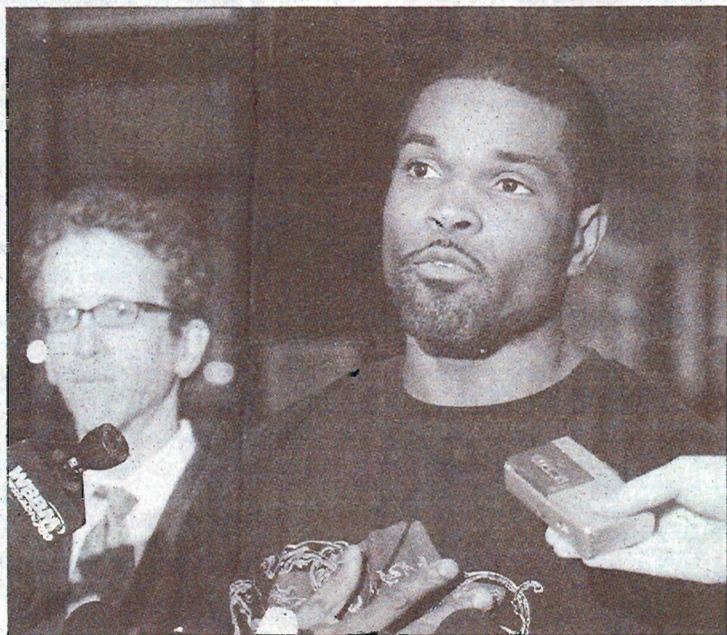
Harold Hill, 33, filed suit Thursday in federal court against nine current and former officers, saying he was struck and coerced into agreeing to a version of events that he contends he was fed during an interrogation at Belmont Area police headquarters.

After DNA tests ruled out Hill and his co-defendant, Dan Young Jr., Cook County prosecutors dropped the case in February 2005.

Hill and his attorney, Jon Loevy, announced the suit Thursday during a news conference at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse. Loevy said the case should raise more questions about how the criminal justice system could allow a man to admit to a horrible crime with which he had nothing to do.

"The answer is Mr. Hill was victimized by a group of Chicago police officers who have victimized not just Mr. Hill and Mr. Young, but a whole wake of victims in their path," Loevy said, adding that DNA evidence has shed light on a pattern of police misconduct.

Hill seeks unspecified damages from nine officers, including Kenneth Boudreau, who was a detective under former Cmdr. Jon Burge in the Belmont Area. The Tribune reported in an investigative series in 2001 that Boudreau had



Tribune photo by Abel Uribe

Harold Hill (right), with attorney Jon Loevy, in the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse after filing a federal lawsuit against Chicago police.

helped get confessions from more than a dozen defendants in cases that ended either in murder charges being dropped or in acquittals.

Burge, who has been named in federal claims and investigated by a special prosecutor, also is a defendant in Hill's suit. A Chicago police spokeswoman said the department would have no comment.

Hill said he wanted some of those he named in the suit to answer for what happened to others.

"People that are locked up right now, that are suffering, that can't get out right now," Hill said. "I feel I'm the voice for them, and justice needs to be served."

Morgan's body was found

Oct. 14, 1990, in an abandoned South Side building that had been set afire. The 39-year-old had suffered a head wound and been strangled.

Hill, then a teenager, was arrested 18 months later on an unrelated charge and questioned. Hill said he made his statement to police after he was slapped and threatened.

"I didn't know what to do," he said. "I was terrified."

"I was afraid they were going to kill me."

Hill and Young allegedly confessed along with a third man, Peter Williams, but Williams was in the Cook County Jail at the time of the murder, so the case against him did not go forward.

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