

Luis Galarza freed after twenty-four (24) years in prison

On April 18, 2024, Judge Tracy Dayton dismissed the charges against Luis Galarza related to a 1999 double homicide after the State declined to retry the case.

BRIDGEPORT, CT, UNITED STATES, April 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On April 18, 2024, the State of Connecticut decided not to re-prosecute Luis Galarza for the murders of two people that took place in Bridgeport in 1999 and a judge dismissed the case. In 2001 Mr. Galarza was arrested and charged with capital felony and two counts of murder. After a trial in 2003, Mr. Galarza was convicted of the crimes but the jury did not impose a sentence of death, as the trial prosecutor asked them to do. Mr. Galarza has maintained his innocence from the time he was first questioned and then arrested for the crime. Last December, after five days of evidence in Mr. Galarza's habeas corpus case, and after his lawyers submitted their arguments to that court in Rockville, Bridgeport prosecutors agreed that the evidence had caused them to lose confidence in the fairness of the conviction so the convictions were vacated by agreement.

Attorneys Michael Brown and Adele Patterson represented Mr. Galarza in that habeas corpus trial and continued to advocate for his innocence when the case was returned to the high court in Bridgeport. Bridgeport State's Attorney Joseph Corradino and Deputy Assistant Jonathan Formichella, who agreed to vacate the convictions, initially sought to again try Mr. Galarza for the double homicide. However, Brown and Patterson had recently persuaded Judge Tracy Dayton in Bridgeport to allow them to present evidence showing why the prosecution should be dismissed. Yesterday's dismissal came after the first day of that hearing. Mr. Corradino detailed for Judge Dayton how he did not believe that the State could prove its case in the event of a retrial.



Attorneys Adele Patterson (left) and Michael Brown (right) with Luis Galarza (center) after his case was dismissed by a Superior Court judge.

Mr. Galarza was convicted on the testimony of jailhouse informants that the State noted might not have been allowed to testify under today's law that recognizes how closely such testimony is associated with wrongful convictions. And, Mr. Corradino recognized that the State's case against Mr. Galarza also had been weakened by Galarza's lawyers uncovering additional evidence undermining the credibility of those jailhouse witnesses that had not been given to his lawyers at the time of his original trial.

"Prosecutors Susan Campbell, Johnathan Formichella, and Joseph Corradino all deserve immense credit for contributing to righting this massive injustice. There are many troubling things that transpired in order for Mr. Galarza to spend 24 years wrongly incarcerated after the State tried to kill him for a crime he did not commit. That story will all be told and hopefully there will be accountability for all of it sooner than later. For now, Mr. Galarza is incredibly grateful to finally be free."

It is Mr. Galarza's attorneys' belief that this is the first time that a case where the State of Connecticut pursued the death penalty and secured a conviction has been vacated and subsequently dismissed.

Mr. Galarza's conviction was in State of Connecticut v. Luis Galarza, FBT-CR01-0174546-T, and was originally tried in the Judicial District of Fairfield at Bridgeport (now Bridgeport Judicial District).

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