

Baumgartner, POLI 203 Fall 2014

NC DP History

Reading: UNC Wilson Library
Collection on-line

October 13, 2014

Catching Up, Greg Taylor

- Interesting or troubling elements of this case:
 - Police tunnel vision
 - Suspects in custody, case closed quickly
 - No investigation of other possible perpetrators
 - Case never seriously re-opened after Taylor's release
 - Lack of respect to victim and her family
 - Media portrayals in particular
 - Greg's drug and alcohol problem
 - He doesn't drink any more!
 - Wrong place / wrong time / wrong people
 - Being there is not illegal. Ditto with Troy Davis. But it can bring the attention of the police.

Greg and Johnny Beck

- Each was encouraged to flip on the other
- “Illegal” questioning
 - He asked for an attorney, they are supposed to stop, right?
 - Actually the law just says that answers cannot be used in court.
 - Can still seek a confession
 - Can still seek information to convict the accomplice
 - Can still use the time to plant critical information about the crime that only the perpetrator would know...

Johnny Beck goes free

- He was more aware of his rights
 - Response to police statements that Greg had fingered him: Show me the videotape.
- He had a better lawyer
- He was the real target, but went free
- Greg did not take the bargain, they went after him
- Colon Willoughby, the DA at the time of exoneration, fought the release, but did apologize at the Inquiry Commission.
 - “All leads keep going back to Greg and Johnny” ...

See the class web site

- Exoneration in California
- Exoneration* in Texas
 - * (Inmate took plea deal to go free on parole, admitted lesser charge of injury to a child. Lawyers contend he was out of state at the time of the crime. Prosecutors insist he was involved.)
- Bias in the Box article about RJA and jury selection issues, features many interviews with people you know

Catching up: Richard Oppel Jr.

- NYTimes journalist who reported on McCollum and Brown back in town
 - Conversation with original DA, very calm, deliberate statement he quoted
 - NYT standards do not normally allow such language in print.
 - Exception was made in this case because of how revealing it was judged to be about the local culture.
- Durham police policy change: Written consent forms, not oral
 - See new form
 - See bar chart

Catching up: Motivated Reasoning

- Slides from last week
- Wednesday, long-run History of DP in NC