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**BRONX DISTRICT ATTORNEY DARCEL D. CLARK ANNOUNCES SHE
WILL MOVE TO VACATE MURDER CONVICTION OF RICHARD ROSARIO
AND CONSENT TO HIS RELEASE AFTER 20 YEARS IN PRISON**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that she will move to vacate the conviction of Richard Rosario for the 1996 fatal shooting of a Bronx teenager and ask that he be released from prison, after a review of the case by the District Attorney's Office determined that Rosario did not receive a fair trial.

District Attorney Clark said, "Imprisoned for half his life, Mr. Rosario was convicted at a trial where he had ineffective counsel, and several alibi witnesses were never interviewed by his attorney. In the interest of justice, I will ask the Court on Wednesday, March 23, 2016, to vacate the conviction so he can be freed as soon as possible.

"We will continue to investigate the murder of Jorge Collazo, who was 17 years old when he was shot and killed, so that his family might have closure," said District Attorney Clark. "The charges against Mr. Rosario will remain open while we complete the alibi witnesses interviews and reinvestigate the case in order to decide whether to retry Mr. Rosario."

The hearing on vacating the conviction will take place today before Administrative Judge Robert E. Torres in Part M86 in the Bronx Hall of Justice.

Rosario, 40, was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison after a trial in Bronx Supreme Court in 1998. He was convicted of murder for shooting Collazo once in the face near White Plains Road and Turnbull Avenue at midday on June 19, 1996.

Rosario has maintained that he was in Deltona, Florida on the day of the killing and he provided nine witnesses who saw him in Florida. His trial counsel never sent an investigator to Florida and the witnesses were never interviewed.



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Rosario challenged his conviction in state court in 2004, but lost. He appealed to various federal courts, all of which have upheld the conviction.

Rosario's new lawyers at the Exoneration Initiative filed another appeal based on new evidence, and asked District Attorney Clark to review the case when she took office in January.

Last week, as a deadline approached for the Office to file a response to Rosario's latest appeal, District Attorney Clark dispatched Deputy Counsel Julian Bond O'Connor, Senior Trial Assistant David Greenfield and two members of the District Attorney's Squad, NYPD Detectives Lionel Holman and Enrique Mariles, to Florida to interview several of the alibi witnesses.

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