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Jury awards \$9 million to man cleared of rape by DNA evidence

Associated Press

CHICAGO - A federal jury awarded \$9 million Tuesday to a 33-year-old man who spent four years in prison before DNA evidence cleared him of rape charges.

"It's a day for justice," said Jon Loevy, an attorney representing Alejandro Dominguez in a civil rights lawsuit against the city of Waukegan and a now-retired police lieutenant.

Dominguez was 16 years old when he was convicted of a 1989 home invasion and rape in Waukegan and sentenced to nine years in prison. He served half that before being released in December 1993 with time off for good behavior.

DNA tests eventually showed Dominguez could not have produced semen recovered from the victim, and a judge overturned his conviction in 2002. He was pardoned by the governor in August 2005, officially clearing his record.

During a two-week trial, Loevy contended that Waukegan police, including now retired Lt. Paul Hendley, contributed to violating Dominguez's due process rights to a fair trial. Loevy said Tuesday that police pushed the rape victim to pick Dominguez out of a "highly suggestive" one-person lineup.

Hendley attorney Mike Noonan did not immediately return a telephone call Tuesday.

Dominguez has said that as a result of the wrongful conviction, he had difficulty finding employment, had troubles with his immigration status and was forced to register as a sex offender.