



PRESS RELEASE

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Social-media campaign raises thousands for wrongfully convicted Iraq-war vet

Los Angeles, CA - When Sergeant Ray Jennings came home from Iraq in 2005, he was arrested at gunpoint and falsely accused of murder. This Fourth of July weekend, Americans are finally thanking him for his service.

The #RepayRay campaign has raised almost \$10,000 dollars to help Sgt. Jennings rebuild his life after 11 of wrongful imprisonment. Organizers hope that figure will multiply as more people help by visiting www.GoFundMe.com/RayJennings.

The campaign was started by Clint Ehrlich, a law student who discovered Jennings' case a year ago on network television. Ehrlich saw holes in the prosecution's case, so he began an investigation with his father, appellate lawyer Jeffrey Ehrlich.

The duo unearthed evidence that convinced the Los Angeles District Attorney's office to release Jennings from prison last week. He had been serving a life sentence for the 2000 murder of 18-year-old college student Michelle O'Keefe.

The killing received national attention, because Jennings was such an unlikely suspect. The married father of four held a secret security clearance, having enlisted in the military at 17 years old, and was training to become a U.S. Marshal.

In Iraq, Jennings commanded a five-man team that searched door-to-door for high-value terrorists. He was nearly killed when an IED exploded beneath his Humvee.

Jennings witnessed the shooting on his second night working part-time as a security guard. He was patrolling a Park-n-Ride lot in Palmdale when he heard gunfire and immediately radioed for help. O'Keefe had been shot to death inside the brand-new Mustang she had just received as a graduation present.

The physical evidence all pointed away from Jennings. There was no gunshot residue on his uniform, and no DNA, hair, or fibers to suggest that he had any contact with O'Keefe. Blood from a different man was found beneath her fingernails.

In February 2005, the D.A.'s office declined to prosecute the case. "There is simply insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Jennings did the killing," wrote Deputy District Attorney Robert Foltz.

Ten months later, without finding new evidence, Foltz charged Jennings with first-degree murder. "I can't put my finger on precisely what the difference is," said Foltz, "but it was clear we had a fileable case."

Last week, the D.A.'s office admitted that it had actually had no case against Jennings. On June 23, he walked out of court a free man. However, the State offered him no compensation for his 11 years of wrongful imprisonment.

Jennings had no money, no clothes, and nowhere to stay. "That's why we started #RepayRay," said Clint Ehrlich. "Ray risked his life for our country. This is the least we can do to pay him back."

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For more information about the Jennings case please see the website for the Ehrlich Law Firm, www.ehrlichfirm.com. Jeffrey I. Ehrlich can be contacted at 818.905.3070.

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