

CARL MURDOCK'S STORY

Wrongful arrest, delayed initial appearance, and financial ruin⁷⁹

On June 19, 2014, Alabama police arrested Carl Murdock, Jr. and booked him into the Montgomery County jail.

After several days without an initial appearance, Mr. Murdock began to ask the jail staff for help. They told him that the judge assigned to his case would be on vacation in July. Unless Mr. Murdock was brought to court soon, he would have to wait until August.

Forty-eight days later, on August 6, 2014, Mr. Murdock finally had his initial appearance. The judge was shocked by his prolonged detention and horrified to discover that his arrest was a mistake. The warrant for Mr. Murdock's arrest was due to a clerical error.

The judge ordered Mr. Murdock's immediate release. But Mr. Murdock's prolonged detention had caused him great harm. Among other things, he had been fired from his job at the Veteran's Administration hospital.

With the judge's help, Mr. Murdock persuaded his boss to rehire him. But Mr. Murdock suffered other financial harms that were not so easy to fix.

During 48 days of wrongful detention, Mr. Murdock lost several

weeks of income. Mr. Murdock defaulted on a loan and was forced into bankruptcy. His roommate sold Mr. Murdock's personal belongings and kicked him out of their apartment. Even his car was repossessed.

If Mr. Murdock had gone to court or seen a lawyer immediately after his arrest, none of that would have happened.

Instead, after seven weeks of detention without an initial appearance, Mr. Murdock was financially ruined.



48 days

