

The Virginian-Pilot

THURSDAY
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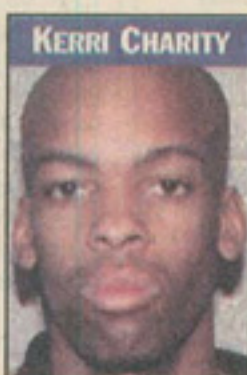
SERVING SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA AND NORTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

129th Year, No. 36

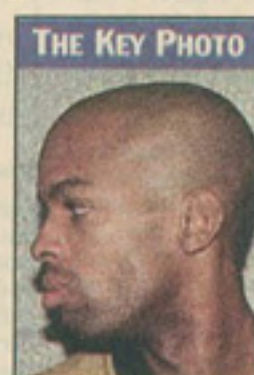
Man convicted in attack may go free



After she was abducted while jogging earlier this year, Melissa Hellstrom unequivocally identified her attacker as John S. Tingle Jr.



She began doubting her identification after seeing Tingle's resemblance to a profile photo of rape suspect Kerri Charity.



MOTOYA NAKAMURA/Staff

John S. Tingle Jr., right, rejoices with his attorneys, Randolph Clark and Janet Rinaldi, after his release on bond from the Virginia Beach jail.

Victim questions her identification

BY LYNN WALTZ
STAFF WRITER

VIRGINIA BEACH — John S. Tingle Jr., convicted in the abduction of a North End jogger last year, was released on \$10,000 bond Wednesday after the victim said she is no longer sure he is her attacker.

Tingle will return to court next

Wednesday, when defense attorneys will ask Judge Thomas S.

Shadrick to dismiss the case. Since the victim's identification was the primary evidence against him, it is likely Tingle will go free, his attorneys said.

In dramatic, surprise testimony

"I said 'Thank God!'"

John S. Tingle Jr.

Wednesday morning, Melissa Hellstrom told how she was plagued by misgivings after media coverage of Tingle's strong resemblance to Kerri Charity, the focus of a Beach serial rape investigation.

Tingle was convicted on the abduction charge in August based

almost solely on Hellstrom's then-unshakable testimony. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison on Nov. 24.

But when Virginia Beach police learned about Charity from Norfolk police, they became so concerned the victim might have confused the two men that several officers testi-

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