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**'GHENT RAPIST' WINS ACQUITTAL IN ATTACK ON TEEN CO-WORKER  
THE JURY WAS NOT TOLD OF HIS FOUR PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS FOR RAPE.**

**Published:** August 19, 1993  
**Section:** LOCAL, page D1  
**Correction** appears at [end of story](#)  
**Source:** Laura LaFay, Staff writer  
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NORFOLK - A jury on Wednesday acquitted ``Ghent rapist'' Clauson Harris of rape, abduction and attempted oral sodomy in a case involving a 16-year-old girl.

Harris, 32, has a history of rape. He was convicted three times as a juvenile and served a 13-year prison sentence in Indiana before moving to Norfolk two years ago. In January, he was convicted of breaking into a woman's Harrington Avenue apartment, raping her and torturing her for four hours Oct. 13, 1991. Harris forced her to shower, douche and clean the furniture and walls. Police had no suspects until two months later, when the 16-year-old Killam Avenue girl accused Harris of some of the same things.

The jurors who acquitted Harris on Wednesday heard none of the evidence from the earlier case. Prosecutors called it ``a travesty for both the victim and the citizens of Norfolk."

``Clauson Harris is a cold, calculating rapist," Lisa Howlett and Patricia West said in a statement. ``He methodically and deliberately picks his victims. And if the rules of evidence had allowed the jury to know his past, we feel certain that the verdict would have been different."

In the Harrington Avenue case, Harris and his victim were strangers. In the Killam Avenue case, he and his accuser worked together.

The teenager, whose birthday was Wednesday, testified that Harris showed up at her apartment Dec. 17, 1991, and grabbed her from behind. Choking her until blood vessels in her eyes broke, he dragged her into a bedroom, raped her twice and held her hostage for six hours, she said.

Defense lawyers argued that the sex was consensual. Harris choked the girl, they said, because she told him she was 14.

``The only people that will ever know what happened in this case are the victim, Harris and God," defense attorney Andrew Protogyrou said.

The jury found Harris guilty of malicious wounding for choking the girl, and petty larceny for stealing her watch and a letter opener.

Circuit Judge Jerome James sentenced him to 11 years. Harris was sentenced to two life terms plus 80 years in the Harrington Avenue case, which is being appealed.

**Correction:**  
\*\*\*\*\*

Clauson Harris was convicted in January of being a principal in the second degree in the rape of a Norfolk woman on Oct. 13, 1991. Under state law, that means he was present at the rape and assisted in it, but did not commit the rape himself. A story Thursday incorrectly reported that he was convicted of raping the woman.

Correction published Friday, August 20, 1993.  
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**Description of illustration(s):**

Photo  
Clauson Winston Harris

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