

The Case of the Cuban Five: Justice or Injustice?

Thursday, October 24, 2013 • Noon, Room 4085
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Law

You are invited to come hear two special guest speakers, attorneys who will speak on the critical issues of the Sixth Amendment right to a fair jury trial and media ethics.



WILLIAM NORRIS, Trial and Appellate Attorney for the Cuban Five, former Assistant United States Attorney and Chief of Narcotics in the Southern District of Florida and is the recipient of the Rodney Thaxton “Liberty’s Last Defender” Award for his representation of The Cuban Five.



JANE KIRTLEY, Professor of Media Ethics and Law at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Minnesota, former Executive Director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and expert on the First Amendment, Freedom of Information, and on media and legal ethics.

The Cuban Five have been imprisoned in the United States since their arrest in 1998 for opposing U.S.-sanctioned terrorist organizations in Miami.

In September 2006, the Miami Herald disclosed that ten local journalists had accepted money from Radio/TV Marti, a U.S. government-run broadcast service based in Miami. Additional documents subsequently obtained through the Freedom of Information Act have shown that the government paid millions of dollars to Miami-area journalists to inflame anti-Cuba sentiment.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that US government had failed to guarantee the Cuban Five a fair trial under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, a treaty the US has ratified. Amnesty International also expressed “serious doubts about the fairness and impartiality of their trial.” A three-jury panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta overturned the Five’s convictions in 2005, citing a “perfect storm” created by the Miami media and government misconduct. But an appeal by the Bush administration reversed the court opinion. The Five are currently in the midst of Habeas Corpus appeals.

This case has set off a firestorm of recriminations within journalistic and legal circles. At the heart of this case is the constitutional right of a defendant to a fair trial.

The Cuban Five were recently featured in a major article in The Washington Post Sunday edition, October 6, 2013.

PIZZA WILL BE SERVED

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There will also be a 6:00 pm event at the Fed Ex Global Education Center with additional speakers