



## LESSON 7 CASE SHEET

### Troy Davis

**SINCE THE AGE OF 19, TROY DAVIS HAS BEEN ON DEATH ROW IN GEORGIA, USA, FOR A MURDER HE INSISTS HE DID NOT COMMIT**

#### What happened?

In the early hours of 19 August 1989, a fight broke out in a car park in Savannah, Georgia – a homeless man Larry Young was beaten. Off-duty police officer Mark Allen MacPhail ran to the scene to help and was shot dead. Sylvester ‘Red’ Coles admitted fighting with Larry Young but claimed Troy Davis shot officer MacPhail. In 1991 Troy was convicted of murder, but there was no physical evidence linking him to the crime and seven out of the nine witnesses, on whose evidence he was convicted, have since recanted or changed their testimony. At the trial, Troy admitted being at the scene but has always maintained his innocence.

#### The legal process

Troy has faced three execution dates over the past few years – he was within two hours of execution on one occasion. In August 2009, in a rare move, he won the right to a new evidentiary hearing – a chance to prove his innocence – scheduled for 23 June 2010.

#### The campaign

Troy’s sister Martina Davis-Correia has fought to free her brother for over 18 years. Martina is Amnesty International’s state death penalty abolition coordinator for Georgia. Amnesty has been campaigning for Troy since issuing a report on his case in 2007. In 2009 an Amnesty International UK delegation, which included Richard Hughes of the band Keane, visited the USA and Troy Davis in support of the campaign to free him, and Martina and her son De’Jaun visited Amnesty UK to raise awareness about his case.



#### In his own words

‘I would like to thank all of you very much from the depths of my heart because my family and I really need more people out there fighting for us and being our voice and showing support. And all of you have really opened the eyes of people all around the world about injustice, not only to me, but about the United States legal system. And it’s an honour to have all of you – your friendship, your support, your letters, and your activist work, it really means a lot.’

#### WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Troy Davis was executed by the state of Georgia on 21 September 2011 despite serious doubts about his guilt. The execution went ahead in the face of a high-profile ‘Too Much Doubt’ campaign, with over one million people worldwide signing a petition to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles calling for them to intervene to prevent the execution. Amnesty International and other campaigners had held vigils around the world as the execution approached, including outside the US embassy in London.

The case against Troy consisted entirely of witness testimony which contained inconsistencies even at the time of the trial. Since then, seven of the nine prosecution witnesses had withdrawn or changed their initial testimonies. Meanwhile, ten people pointed to one of the remaining witnesses as the actual killer.