

Abstract Submitted  
for the NES21 Meeting of  
The American Physical Society

**Physics played a role in the release of Jerry Banks after serving 6 years on death row in Georgia** ALLAN PIERCE, Retired — Telling of this story is somewhat prompted by current interest in the news of questions concerning biased administration of justice. Jerry Banks was on death row in Georgia for six years. He had been found guilty of first-degree murder in two previous trials, but the evidence was circumstantial, and the conviction was appealed. New evidence suggested he might be innocent, and a major question was whether shots heard by witnesses came from the murder weapon. The shots that were heard were in rapid succession and Banks had a single-shot shotgun. Maybe they were fired by a deer-hunter at a different location. Police did a test and concluded that the shots that were heard could not have come from the murder site because such could not have been heard at the listener sites. However, whether distant sounds are heard or not depends on the local and current meteorology. Question came down to a problem in applied atmospheric acoustics. Author proved that on the day of the murder the shots could have been heard. They may have been fired by the murder weapon, but not from Banks's gun. Banks was subsequently released in 1980.

Allan Pierce  
Retired

Date submitted: 06 Apr 2021

Electronic form version 1.4