

1. Read the following text.

Rubin Carter was born on May 6, 1937 in Paterson, New Jersey. His parents were fairly **well off** and had six other children. When he was fourteen, he was arrested for **assault** and **robbery**, although he later **claimed** that it was a case of self defense. Nonetheless, he was **convicted** and **sentenced** to serve time at a **juvenile** prison.

well off (adj) = having a lot of money, or enough money to have a good standard of living.

assault (n) (v) = to physically attack someone; the crime of physically attacking someone,

robbery (n) = the crime of stealing money or things from a bank, shop etc, especially using violence.

self defense (n) = something you do to protect yourself or your property.

juvenile = relating to young people who are not yet adults.

When he was a young adult, he was arrested again and **sentenced** to five years in prison. During that time, he learned boxing and was ready to become a professional by the time he was released in September of 1961. He became known for his skills of fast movements and powerful punching, earning the nickname "Hurricane".

sentenced = if a judge sentences someone who is guilty of a crime, they give them a punishment.

On June 17, 1966 at 2:30 AM, two black males entered the Lafayette Bar and Grill in the city of Paterson, New Jersey. They began shooting, killing the bartender and a customer, as well as **wounding** a female customer and a male customer. Carter and his friend, John Artis, were brought to the scene of the

crime after being **pulled over** since they matched the description of the suspects. Although there was no physical evidence that they were related to the crime, police did find a **pistol bullet** and **shotgun shell** matching those used in the shootings. After being given a **polygraph** test, the examiner claimed that Carter was using **deceptive** methods to answer all questions about the crime.

wounding = injuring; to injure someone with a knife, gun etc.

pulled over (ph v) = drove to the side of the road and stopped your car, or made someone else do this. *The policeman told him to **pull over**.*

bullet (n)

shell (n) =

a polygraph test (n) =

deceptive (adj) = intended to make someone believe something that is not true.

Two **petty** criminals, Bello and Bradley, **claimed** that they saw Carter and Artis leave the bar carrying weapons. A woman named Patrica Valentine also **claimed** that the car she saw leaving the bar was Carter's. Carter and Artis were both **convicted** by an all white **jury** and **sentenced** to life in prison. Carter continued to maintain his innocence, writing a book called "The Sixteenth Round: From Number 1 to #45472" that was published in 1974.

petty (adj) = a **petty** crime is a crime that is not serious, for example stealing things that are not very valuable; a **petty** criminal is a criminal whose crimes are not very serious.

claimed (v) = to state that something is true, even though it has not been proven.

convicted (v) = to prove or officially announce that someone is guilty of a crime after a **trial** in a law court.

jury (n) = a group of 12 ordinary people who listen to the details of a case in court and decide whether someone is guilty or not.

innocence (n) = the fact of being not guilty of a crime.

Carter's story gained so much **publicity** that Bob Dylan wrote a song called "Hurricane" that suggested that Carter was innocent. Carter developed a strong following of supporters and eventually Bello and Bradley, the two primary **eyewitnesses**, changed their story and said that Carter and Artis were not the people that they saw leaving the bar. In 1976, he was given a new **trial** by the New Jersey **Supreme Court**.

eyewitnesses (n, people) =

a trial (n) = a legal process in which a judge and often **a jury** in a court of law examine information to decide whether someone is guilty of a crime.

Supreme Court (n) = the most important court of law in some countries or some states of the US.

The **prosecutor** of the **trial**, Burrell Ives Humphreys, offered Carter the chance to take a **lie detector test** before the **trial** began. He promised to see to it that Carter was released if he passed the test, but Carter refused. At the **trial**, Carter was again **found guilty**, this time by a **jury** that included two black **jurors**, and **sentenced** to life in prison.

prosecutor (n, person) = a lawyer who is trying to prove in a court of law that someone is guilty of a crime.

a lie detector test (n) =

jurors (n, people) = a member of a jury.

In 1985, a United States District Court judge, H. Lee Sarokin, ruled that Carter's trial had not been fair and the **prosecution** was based on **racism** and **concealment** of evidence. In 1988, all **charges** were **dropped** against Carter and Artis.

prosecution (n) = **the charges**; when a charge is made against someone for a crime, or when someone is judged for a crime in a court of law.

racism (n) =

concealment (n) = the hiding of something, like **evidence** in a trial.

charges (n) = official statements made by the police saying that they believe someone may be guilty of a crime.

dropped (v) = to stop doing something, discussing something, or continuing with something.

Following his release, Carter moved to a farm near Toronto, Canada. In 1993, he was made executive director of "The Association in Defence of the Wrongly **Convicted**", serving until 2005. Currently, he works as a motivational speaker. On October 14, 2005, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws from York University. In 1999, his story inspired a feature film called "The Hurricane", starring Denzel Washington.

2. Find the answers to the following questions below in the reading:

- a. Did Carter commit assault and robbery when he was a teenager?
Yes, he did, although he claims it was in self defence.
- b. Where did Carter learn how to box?
In prison.
- c. Why was he nicknamed, "The Hurricane?"
Because of the way he moved and boxed when he was boxing. He moved and punched quickly and powerfully like a hurricane.
- d. Why were Carter and Artis arrested for the shooting at the Lafayette Grill?
Because they matched the description of the murderers.
- e. Did Carter fail the first lie detector test?
Yes, he did.
- f. How many eyewitnesses **accused** Carter of the crime?
Three, Bello, Bradley, and a woman named Patricia Valentine.
- g. Why were Carter and Artis given a new trial in 1976?
Because Bello and Bradley, the two primary eyewitnesses changed their stories and said that Carter and Artis were not the people that they saw leaving the bar.
- h. In your own words, why were the charges dropped against Rubin Carter in 1985?
Because he was black and because the police hid information.
(Because of racism and concealment of evidence.)

3. Discussion

- a. What do you think of Rubin Carter's life's story?
- b. Do you think he was innocent or guilty? Why?
- c. Do you know of similar situations from your own country or from other countries?
- d. Why do you think some people are convicted of a crime when they are actually innocent?