

February 4, 2025

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
St Paul MN

Cc: LT. Governor Peggy Flanagan

From: PHILLIP VANCE
2/04/2025 06:35 AM

Governor Walz

I would first like to congratulate you on your amazing run for the Vice Presidency this past election. My name is Philip Vance (no relation to your opponent). In 2004 I was wrongfully convicted by a Dakota County jury for the 2002 murder/robbery of a South St. Paul store clerk, Khaled Al-Bakri. I became the suspect to Khaled's murder because of statements a bar maid relayed to her St. Paul police brother that I allegedly made to her. I was charged w/ 1st Degree murder and convicted from the testimony of officers from the Metro Gang Strike Force and their informants. I was sentenced to life in prison.

No evidence tied or linked me to the crime scene or Khaled's untimely death. I've been incarcerated wrongfully now 21 years. I have exhausted all appeal options and consistently was denied by courts.

Ironically 5 years after my wrongful conviction, the group of police officers that investigated me, as well as testified on the case I was wrongfully convicted of (M.G.S.F) were found to be a group of "rouge" officers and corrupt. These facts/details were investigated/discovered by now Federal Attorney General Andrew Luger. After being reinterviewed, most witnesses/informants who testified against me at trial admitted that their testimonies (Grand Jury/trial) were coerced and derived from promises of time reductions in cases they were facing. Promises of dismissed charges, and financial incentives for testimony favorable to my conviction.

Witnesses even admitted that the details they testified to was given to them by police, members of the M.G.S.F.

In 2020 I was encouraged to allow the Conviction Review Unit (C.R.U) to investigate the facts/details of my case, possibly using their influence to ask Dakota County to exonerate me. I was interviewed by assistant Attorney General Carrie Sperling and her investigator in March of 2024. I was told this interview would be the final phase of the C.R.U's investigation. 1 year has passed since that interview, and it is going on 5 years that the C.R.U has been holding their decision about my case.

It is obvious that my incarceration came at the hands of people the state of Minnesota holds to high standards. It is also obvious that the powers that be are afraid to express what has been revealed/discovered about some Minnesota police officers. Hundreds of people the CRU investigated were denied and told no evidence was discovered/found that they felt required exoneration. They have held my case for almost 5 years now. Why haven't I been denied if no evidence was discovered/found that I did not meet their threshold for exoneration?

I believe the truth about the M.G.S.F and their actions is not a good look for the state of Minnesota. I also think agreeing that the actions of these officers was wrong creates mistrust for the police of this state. Which creates even bigger issues for officer's of the law. Not to mention possibly hundreds of cases that would need to be reopened and reviewed.

Governor, I've been incarcerated almost 22 years for a crime I had NO KNOWLEDGE OF, nor participated in. Thru due diligence, my legal team, and supporters have discovered, collected, and gathered a plethora of evidence that shows/prove that I was blamed, lied on, and wrongfully convicted of a heinous murder I played no part in, or knew nothing about.

I ask you Governor Walz to look into the details that surround my conviction, then look into the truths that have appeared after my wrongful conviction. I should not have to continuously suffer because people of power/influence of Minnesota are afraid of what holding other people of power/influence in Minnesota accountable for their actions will look like to the people of Minnesota. And even America. I thought holding people accountable for their actions was what America was about? If that is not the definition of justice, I do not know what is???

Thank you for your time. Hopefully my inconvenience/suffering peaks your interest.

Sincerely, Philip Vance #215517