



William Richards was wrongfully convicted of murdering Pamela Richards, his wife. **COURTESY OF WILLIAM RICHARDS**



Pamela Richards' body was found by William Richards in a sleeping bag on the couple's undeveloped 5-acre property in the Summit Valley area, south of Hesperia, on Aug. 10, 1993. **COURTESY OF MCLANE, BEDNARSKI & LITT**

911 at 11:58 p.m., reporting two more times before the his wife's death. He called first deputy arrived on scene

at 12:38 a.m.

Investigators and prosecutors argued that William Richards killed his 40-year-old wife sometime between the time he arrived home and the time he made his first 911 call.

McLane said exculpatory evidence that could have helped prove William Richards' innocence — such as a blond hair found under Pamela Richards' fingernail that belonged to neither her nor her husband — was never presented to the defense during any of the criminal trials.

While Pamela Richards had blond hair at the time of

her death, McLane said she bleached her hair and had naturally brown hair.

"This hair was blonde at the root. If that hair came from Pamela Richards, that hair should have been brown. And that evidence was suppressed from the defense," said McLane, adding that DNA testing confirmed the hair strand belonged to an unknown third party.

DNA testing also revealed that hair and blood samples taken from a cinder block and concrete paver used to crush the victim's skull was not that of either the victim nor her husband, court records show.

Additionally, a bite mark on Pamela Richards' thumb, which prosecutors argued was inflicted by her husband, was not introduced as evidence until his third criminal trial. A prosecution expert testified that William Richards' teeth matched the bite mark, but then later admitted he was wrong. It was unclear if DNA testing was ever run on the bite mark to see if it matched that of William Richards.

While McLane believes the county will appeal the verdict and attempt to get the jury award reduced, county spokesperson David Wert said that decision will ultimately have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

"The Board of Supervisors will be advised of the verdict and decide what the next steps will be," Wert said in an email on Tuesday.

District Attorney Jason Anderson declined to comment on the jury verdict.

Released from custody after 23 years, William Richards found himself in a world unfamiliar to him — with no money, no family and no home.

"Everything I had was gone. All my friends died, all my family died," William Richards said.

He wound up staying indefinitely with the family of an attorney for the California Innocence Project, which took up William Richards' case and helped in his fight for freedom.

Five years after his release, on June 18, 2021, a San Bernardino County Superior Court judge granted a motion filed by William Richards' attorney and declared him factually innocent. Since that qualified him for reparations from the California Victim Compensation Board, William Richards filed a claim with the board. Two weeks later, he was granted more than \$1.1 million.

William Richards said the money allowed him to travel, purchase a home and vehicle, and settle down in Oklahoma, where he lives with his new wife, Marcella.

He feels justice is complete with the recent jury award.

"I find it very satisfying," he said. "After more than 30 years of this, I can pick up the pieces and move on."

Innocent man

William Richards spent 23 years behind bars over wrongful conviction in his wife's killing

By Joe Nelson
JNELSON@SCNG.COM

It's been nine years since William Richards was released from prison, but the emotional scars still linger from the 23 years he spent behind bars for a crime he didn't commit. Every day was hell. You just

keep saying, 'I don't deserve this. I didn't do this,'" Richards, now 75, said in an interview with the Southern California News Group.

Indeed, the California Supreme Court agreed with Richards that he was wrongly convicted, blaming overzealous San Bernardino County Sheriff's

Department investigators and prosecutors for botching the investigation into the murder of Richards' wife, Pamela Richards, who was killed in 1993 by someone who strangled her, beat her with rocks and crushed her skull with a concrete stepping stone.

And last week, a federal court jury ordered San Bernardino County to pay Richards \$25.2 million for his wrongful

See **RICHARDS** on Page A7



William Richards, now 75, was wrongfully convicted of the 1993 murder of his wife, who was found dead at their Summit Valley property, and spent 23 years behind bars. **COURTESY OF WILLIAM RICHARDS**

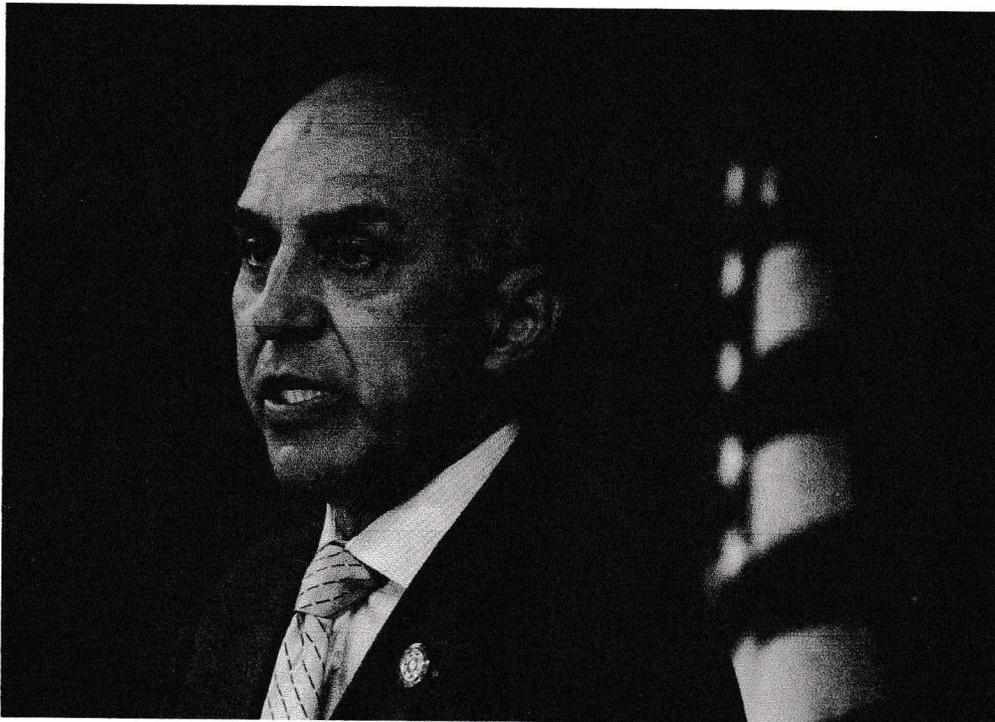
HABIT AND ROUTINE

Exhibit X

NEWS • News

Former San Bernardino County DA suspended, sanctioned by State Bar for misconduct

'Given their power in our justice system, holding prosecutors accountable is the most important function of the State Bar,' said a plaintiff's attorney



HARRIS + ROUTINE

FU 12

Former District Attorney Ramos Destroyed Evidence, Federal Judge Concludes

Posted on April 24, 2020 by Venturi

By Mark Gutglueck

More than two-and-a-half years after prosecutors failed to obtain convictions against three former San Bernardino County public officials and the wealthy developer accused of bribing them, pretrial skirmishing in the federal civil case the four once-accused brought against the county for what they say was malicious prosecution continues apace. That political corruption case, in which three public officials had been previously convicted, took nearly a decade to resolve. Late last month, the plaintiffs in the civil action achieved a minor victory in the form of one federal judge finding and another federal judge confirming that the central defendant in the matter engaged in the destruction of evidence.

That finding and its accompanying ruling by the trial judge is significant from the standpoint that the offending party was Mike Ramos, the district attorney whose office had prosecuted the four individuals who now say they were wrongfully caught up in the criminal matter, which dealt with events that took place in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 and went to trial in 2017.

Of note is that much or all of the erased or destroyed information in question consisted of emails and text messages relating to Ramos's personal, political and professional communications during his 2018 reelection campaign, which came after the trial of the four individuals – Jeff Burum, Paul Biane, Mark Kirk and Jim Erwin – took place the previous year.

A key player in the matter is Bill Postmus, one of the most dynamic political entities in San Bernardino County at the turn of the Third Millennium and arguably the most powerful personage within San Bernardino County government through most of the current century's first decade. Postmus's reign came at the end of a several-decades-long period now known as San Bernardino County's "Golden Age of Corruption," an era in which individuals such as Fifth District County Supervisor Robert Hammock, Second District Supervisor Cal McElwain, Fifth District Supervisor Jerry Eaves, sheriffs Frank Bland, Floyd Tidwell and Gary Penrod, county administrative officers Robert Covington, Harry Mays and James Hlawek, district attorneys Jerome Kavanaugh and James Cramer, County Treasurer Tom O'Donnell, County Investment Officer Sol Levin, Fontana Mayor Nat Simon, Fontana City Manager Jack Ratelle, Hesperia City Manager Robert Rizzo, Colton Mayor Karl Gaytan, Colton councilmembers James Grimsby, Don Sanders and Abe Beltran among others freely participated in an openly pay-for-play environment in which bribes and kickbacks and the use of governmental authority to perpetuate political power and enable financial empires were the common ethos, a circumstance that some believe persisted throughout Postmus's tenure and beyond to the current time in the personages of former Upland Mayor John Pomierski, former Upland councilmen Michael Libutti, Ken Willis, Brendan Brandt and Tom Thomas, Upland City Manager Robb Quincey, First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, Second District Supervisor Janice Rutherford, Fourth District Supervisor Curt Hagman and Third District

HABIT AND
ROUTINE

FU 13

Now Ramos is opposing DNA testing that could exonerate death row prisoner Kevin Cooper, who will be one the of first in line for execution once the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is cleared to use its revamped lethal injection protocol. In 2016, Cooper's attorneys submitted a petition to Gov. Jerry Brown with a simple request: That the state provide the crime scene evidence in its possession for testing using new methods and without the contamination and tampering alleged to have occurred in 2002.

That petition lay dormant until a searing reexamination of Cooper's case by Pulitzer-winning columnist Nicholas Kristof was published in The New York Times on May 17. Kristof noted the racism that pervaded Cooper's trial as a black man accused of murdering four white victims and argued that the San Bernardino Police Department framed Cooper while ignoring compelling evidence pointing to a different -- Caucasian -- suspect.

Kristof wrote, "I've never come across a case in America as outrageous as Kevin Cooper's." In response, many implored the governor to act, including both of California's senators, Diane Feinstein and Kamala Harris.

Ramos responded by filing a 94-page opposition. In a press release, he publicly denounced what he called "the repeated and false claims from Cooper and his propaganda machine."

Then there is the infamous Colonies case, a nine-year vendetta by Ramos to seek public corruption convictions against three former San Bernardino County officials and a real estate developer. The result was three acquittals and a hung jury in what his opponent, Anderson, calls a "wrongful political prosecution." The four men, all of whom insist they are innocent, have sued or filed claims against the county for \$250 million. Ramos has also lost the confidence of many in his own office, who believe he is more interested in scoring political points and seeking higher office than doing his job. The editorial board has dubbed the case "a boondoggle."

San Bernardino County is the 12th most populous county in the United States. Whoever wins this race will have jurisdiction over more than 2 million people, wielding the awesome power that comes with deciding who to charge and what penalty to seek. If Ramos prevails, he will do everything he can to ensure that Cooper's penalty is death, which risks the ultimate horror: the state killing of an innocent person.

RAMOS KNEW A WHITE MAN KILLED THE VICTIMS, YET HE WITHHELD EVIDENCE, THEN RAMOS' KNOWING COOPER'S BLOOD ON VICTIMS CLOTHING AND BLEED PRESERVATIVES IN IT STILL BANNED THE KILL COOPER DAZUM - WHAT'S WRONG WITH RAMOS?

HABIT AND ROUTINE

WTF

FU14

A3



But Cooper remains on death row, and his chances of getting off anytime soon appear unlikely despite solid claims of police misconduct.

Larry Hannan

Jun 21, 2017

SHARE



"The evidence of police tampering is overwhelming," Kristof wrote. "When lawyers working on Cooper's appeal asked for DNA testing on a T-shirt believed to belong to the killer, the lab found Cooper's blood on the shirt—but also something astonishing: The blood had test tube preservative in it! In other words, it appeared to have come from the supply of Cooper's blood drawn by the police and kept in a test tube."

Cooper was convicted and sentenced to death for the June 1983 murders of Doug and Peggy Ryen, their daughter Jessica, 10, and Chris Hughes, an 11-year-old neighbor who was at the Ryen's house at the time the crime occurred. The youngest Ryen child, 8-year-old Joshua, had his throat slit but survived the attack.

Joshua later told police that the attackers were three or four white men. Kevin Cooper is black.

But San Bernardino County District Attorney Mike Ramos has steadfastly insisted that Cooper is guilty, and should be executed.

Ramos criticized Brown for writing the letter for the governor. In a post to his Facebook page Ramos said he was "disgusted" by Brown's comments.

"He killed a family and two little children, and left their family members to suffer a lifetime of pain," Ramos posted. "The American Bar Association has no business commenting on a case in San Bernardino County and calling into question the integrity of this office."

Ramos has not commented on Kristof's column, but has previously said that all allegations of misconduct in the case have been rejected by state and federal courts.

Ramos has been a vocal death penalty supporter, spending a year campaigning for Proposition 66, which was designed to lessen the amount of time death penalty appeals take. Voters approved the measure, but the California Supreme court is now deciding whether it is constitutional.

Ramos was also cited by the Fair Punishment Project as an overzealous prosecutor in its report, Too Broken To Fix, that spotlighted outlier counties that overused the death penalty.

"A review of direct appeals from the past decade reveals that the San Bernardino County District Attorney's office has continuously sought the death penalty for very young adults, individuals with mental illness, and an individual who was convicted of capital murder even though he was not the triggerman," the report said.

And despite multiple exonerations and numerous problems with the quality of defense lawyering, Ramos has "claimed that minimum competency requirements for post-conviction defense attorneys handling capital cases are

our justice system," the report said.

Cooper was almost executed in 2004, getting a stay of execution only hours before he was supposed to be put to death.

AG

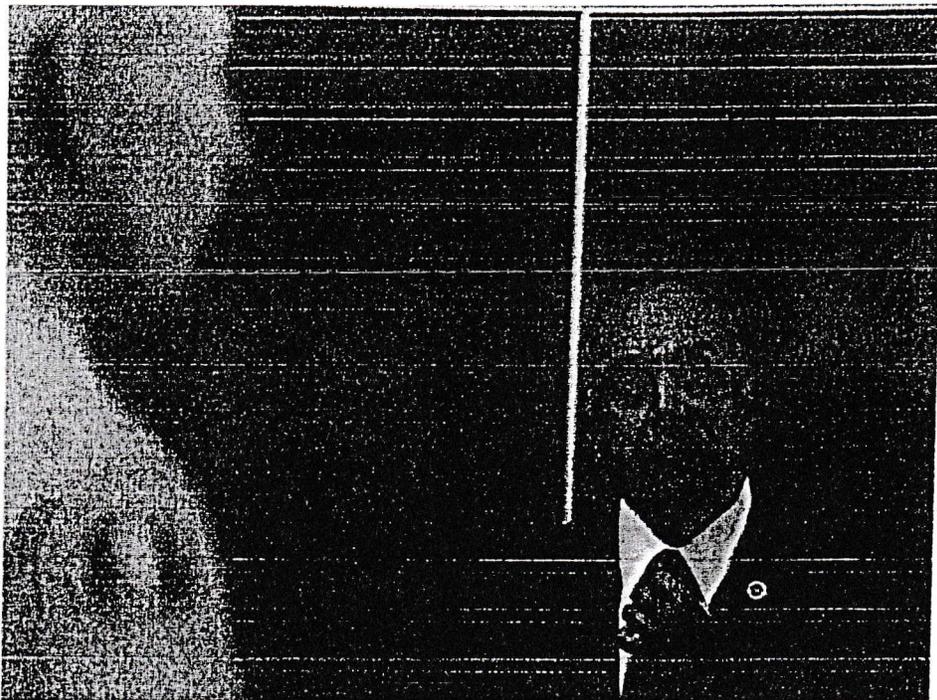
THEY WANTED TO KILL AN AFRICAN MAN WHILE THEY KNEW A WHITE MAN COMMITTED THE CRIME BUT WITHHELD THAT EVIDENCE, THEN PLANTED EVIDENCE TO INCRIMINATE HOW MANY DID RAMOS CONVICT THIS WAY?

FU 15 HABIT AND ROUTINE

SUPPORT A WORKER-LED APPEAL. DONATE TO HELP US CONTINUE OUR WORK

OPINION

District Attorney Michael Ramos is a roadblock to justice



District Attorney Mike Ramos straightens his tie before a press conference for Operation Desert Guardian on Wednesday, October 18, 2017. Operation Desert Guardian, conducted in the High Desert by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, began on Friday, June 2, 2017. Throughout the Operation deputies seized multiple firearms, drugs, and made several arrests in the cities of Victorville, Adelanto, Apple Valley, and Hesperia. (Sarah Alvarado fo The Sun)



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ROUTINE

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