

Stan 'Tookie' Williams Loses Appeal

Written by Robert ID839

Sunday, 06 February 2005 00:09 -

Stanley "Tookie" Williams, the Los Angeles gang leader whose life on death row was chronicled last year in the cable television movie REDEMPTION: THE STAN TOOKIE WILLIAMS STORY, a Fox made-for-TV movie starring Jamie Foxx as the reformed gang leader. Stan 'Tookie' Williams is the founder of the Crips L.A. street gang which is popular among the rap and hip-hop culture. Mr. Williams lost a crucial appeal Wednesday that could put him in line to be California's next candidate for execution.

Over the vigorous objections of nine judges who believe Williams' 1981 death sentence may have been tainted by racial bias, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused to reconsider his bid for a new trial for the 1979 killings of four people during two separate robberies. Williams' only legal recourse now lies with the U.S. Supreme Court, which seldom intervenes in such cases.

If Williams fails to persuade the Supreme Court to take his case, he could face an execution date later this year and confront Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger with a tough decision on whether to grant him clemency.

Williams has forged a complex legacy on death row, going from co-founder of the Crips street gang in 1971 and a convicted quadruple murderer to a Nobel Peace Prize nominee for his campaign against gang violence. He's written books to discourage schoolchildren from joining gangs and set up a Web site, "Tookie's Corner," to renounce the gang culture. Visit "Tookie's Corner" [HERE](#) .

The 9th Circuit, when it originally affirmed Williams' death sentence in 2002, took the unprecedented step of calling him a "worthy candidate for clemency" because of his death row work. The FX Network depicted Williams' death row conversion in last year's film "Redemption," which starred Oscar-nominee Jamie Foxx. And earlier this week, a group of professors nominated Williams for a Nobel for the fifth time.

Williams' supporters vowed to keep fighting for a reprieve.

"Clemency has to be a consideration," said Oakland journalist Barbara Becnel, Williams'

Stan 'Tookie' Williams Loses Appeal

Written by Robert ID839

Sunday, 06 February 2005 00:09 -

closest confidant. "Stan's position, though, is that he shouldn't have to go for clemency, he should get justice. And justice would be a new trial."

The 9th Circuit's decision in Williams' case is the second in the past week to put a death row inmate in the final stages before setting an execution date. The court last week turned away condemned Glenn County killer Clarence Ray Allen's last appeals, raising the possibility of two more California executions this year.

San Mateo County murderer Donald Beardslee was executed Jan. 19 after a three-year hiatus on executions in this state.

Williams has spent 24 years on death row for fatally shooting Albert Owens, a store clerk, for \$120, and two weeks later killing motel owners Thsai-Shai and Yen-I-Yang and their daughter to keep them from identifying him as he robbed them of \$600. Prosecutors and Owens' stepmother have previously told the Mercury News that his death row work does not compensate for his crimes.

Williams maintains he's innocent.

"I'm black, I'm poor, I'm considered to be a thug," Williams told the San Jose Mercury News in 2002. "Because of my lifestyle, it was easy to say, 'He did it.' Who's going to listen to me?"

Prosecutors have argued that Williams received a fair trial, and a succession of courts have rejected Williams' appeals. The latest 9th Circuit decision hinged in large part on Williams' argument, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, that blacks were deliberately kept off his jury by a prosecutor who had been reprimanded in other capital cases for the same practice.

A majority of the 24 full-time judges without comment voted against rehearing his case. But nine of the judges - four votes short of what he needed - said Williams had offered enough proof that jury selection had been marred by racial bias.

Stan 'Tookie' Williams Loses Appeal

Written by Robert ID839

Sunday, 06 February 2005 00:09 -

"If our judicial system is to inspire a sense of confidence among the populace, we must not, we cannot permit trials to proceed in the face of blatant, race-based jury selection practices," Judge Johnnie Rawlinson wrote for the dissenters.

Becnel called it important that so many judges found racial bias in Williams' trial, but called it "shameful, shameful, shameful" that the 9th Circuit refused to grant a new trial.

"We are in 2005, in the 21st century, and we are preparing to send a man to his death who many judges have said did not have a fair trial," Becnel said. "It is bigger than Stanley 'Tookie' Williams at this time."

Williams will be asking the Supreme Court to review racial bias in capital jury selection at a time when justices are already considering the question in the case of Texas death row inmate Thomas Miller-El. Andrea Asaro, Williams' appellate attorney, said she's hopeful the court's ruling in the Texas case, due by June, will help Williams' argument.

But state prosecutors say there was no evidence of bias in the trial.

"In this particular case, he received a fair trial and got a just verdict," said Nathan Barankin, a spokesman for Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

[Source](#)