

'Tookie' Williams Faces Execution in 2006

Written by Robert ID1980

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Most people familiar with hip-hop culture know who Stanley 'Tookie' Williams is. He is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. His memoir, 'Blue Rage, Black Redemption' is a great informative read. The DVD 'Redemption' starring Jamie Foxx, and Lynn Whitfield has earned worldwide critical acclaim. He is one of the founders of the Crips.

Many hip-hop and rap artists are members or are affiliated with different gangs and this is no secret, as many sport sect tattoos or talk freely about their affiliations with different groups.

Recently Bob Egelko of the San Francisco Chronicle wrote on Tookie's President's Call to Service Award presented to Tookie, which was accompanied by a laudatory letter from President Bush. It was issued to Stanley "Tookie" Williams, a California Death Row inmate who has written a series of books warning young people against the gang life; the White House had no idea who Tookie was.

On October 11th, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Stanley "Tookie" Williams' appeal to investigate the racism and discrimination at the heart of the case, as well as Tookie's innocence issues. The prosecutor in Tookie's original case removed all of the Black jurors from the jury, leaving an all-white jury to deliberate the case. During the trial, this prosecutor made racially-coded remarks during his closing argument, comparing Williams to a Bengal tiger in a zoo, and stating that a black community - South Central Los Angeles - was equivalent to the natural "habitat" of a Bengal Tiger.

The Supreme Court's refusal to investigate racism in this case establishes as "case law" for the nation the right for prosecutors to exclude jurors on the basis of race and to denigrate minority defendants in front of all-white juries. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals posited in 2002 that Tookie's prison writings, in which he renounces his former life as a gangster, could be grounds for the California governor to grant him clemency. If he is not granted clemency, he will be executed on December 13th.

Campaign to End the Death Penalty is sponsoring a "Voices from Death Row" speaking tour. It

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includes Tookie's friend and advocate, Barbara Becnel, and there were events in San Francisco and Berkeley on October 11th. The Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarians will be screening the movie "Redemption", which is about Tookie's life, on Friday, October 21st, at 7:00 pm, at 1924 Cedar St. at Bonita Ave. in Berkeley.

The U.S. Supreme Court has now rejected Tookie's appeal to investigate the racism and discrimination at the heart of his case, as well as Tookie's innocence issues. One issue highlighted the fact that the prosecutor in Tookie's original case removed all of the Black jurors from the jury, leaving an all-white jury to deliberate his case. During Stan's trial, this prosecutor made racially-coded remarks during his closing argument, comparing Stan during the trial to a Bengal tiger in the zoo and stating that a black community - South Central Los Angeles - was equivalent to the natural "habitat" of a Bengal Tiger. s

Now upheld by the United States Supreme Court, this ruling will establish as "case law" for the nation the right for prosecutors to exclude jurors on the basis of race and to denigrate minority defendants in front of all-white juries.

The ruling is a frontal attack on the civil rights of all Americans.

The California State Supreme Court had twice censured this prosecutor for equally discriminatory behavior. Indeed, a member of the California Supreme Court at that time made the following statement about that prosecutor:

...I believe that we must place the ultimate blame on its real source - the prosecutor. It was he who unconstitutionally struck Black prospective jurors. The record compels this conclusion and permits none other... This prosecutor knew that such conduct was altogether improper. The trial court told him as much. And so did we... This court attempted to teach this same prosecutor that invidious discrimination was unacceptable when we reversed a judgment of death because of similar improper conduct on his part. He failed - or refused - to learn his lesson. The result is another reversal - and another costly burden on the administration of justice.

Amicus Brief Filed By ACLU On Tookie's Behalf

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The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union), the national NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) and several other civil rights groups have filed an amicus (Friend of the Court) brief urging the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to consider racist injustices in jury selection during Tookie's 1981 trial.

For more on the Stan 'Tookie' Williams case visit - http://www.indybay.org/archives/archive_by_id.php?id=2848&category_id=13

Visit Tookie's web site at - www.tookie.com