

MICHAEL GOODWIN CASE SUMMARY

- **MICKEY THOMPSON MURDERED:** On March 16, 1988, a still unidentified gunman murdered racing legend Mickey Thompson and his wife. There has been no aggressive search for this killer. Nearly 20 years later in 2007, *Michael Goodwin was convicted* of “orchestrating” these murders *despite the fact that he was never connected with the unidentified killer or the crimes in any way*. The trial judge succinctly summed up the case: “*This whole prosecution is premised on one thing, and that is that the motive for the murders was because of the business dispute that existed and the lengths to which Mr. Goodwin would go to avoid having to satisfy the judgment and basically paying up.*”

This alleged “motive,” falsely expanded and enhanced by prosecutors to wrongfully convict Goodwin, can now be proven to have been totally fabricated by the lead investigator and the victim’s sister, Collene Campbell, a political powerhouse with connections at the highest levels of city, state and federal governments. The plan to wrongfully convict Goodwin was conceived to prevent him from exposing the serious financial crimes Campbell had committed in connection with her brother’s death, his estate and business interests, including over \$1 million looted from Goodwin by attorneys and accountants.

Indicative of Campbell’s influence on the highest officials in Orange County’s justice system, is the fact that Goodwin’s arrest came just 5 days after he initiated legal proceedings against Collene Campbell.

- **\$1,000,000 REWARD IS A HOAX:** The evidence is crystal clear that all four crime scene witnesses reported that the shooter was a White man who used the same gun to kill both Mickey and Trudy. However, in 1997, 9 years after the murders, lead investigator, Det. Mark Lillienfeld, of the L.A. Sheriff’s Department, in cooperation with Thompson’s sister, Colleen Campbell, conjured up phony descriptions of *two Black* triggermen, though no evidence supports those claims. Their brilliant plan would not only protect Campbell from exposure of the crimes she committed by having Goodwin incarcerated and unable to pursue action against her but insured that she would never have to pay out the \$1 million reward money. The bogus reward, never paid despite Goodwin’s conviction, was widely publicized with “composite drawings” of the “two suspected Black killers” on the reward flyers/posters and featured on many national TV programs. However, there is no evidence the “suspects” had anything to do with the killings or even existed. In the *media* coverage of the \$1 million reward, it was stated “the only person suspected of *ordering* the killings” was Michael Goodwin, and his photo was included on popular national TV programs such as “*American’s Most Wanted,*” produced and hosted by Campbell’s friend, John Walsh. However, Goodwin was *not* “wanted” or even a suspect since he had essentially been cleared in late 1988. Moreover, there *were* suspects with much stronger evidence tying them to the murders, but the L.A.D.A. insisted that investigators pursue only Goodwin.

- **GOODWIN AND THOMPSON WERE NEVER “PARTNERS:”** In 1984, Goodwin had attempted a trial business relationship with Mickey Thompson whose stadium off-road racing events had been unsuccessful. After only 3½ months, the relationship failed and Thompson sued, winning a \$500,000 judgment, which, over the years, ballooned to \$794,000 with litigation costs. Goodwin and Thompson wrangled in the courts for 3 years. Contrary to the fallacious prosecution charges, months before the murders, Goodwin made irreversible deposits of \$912,000 with the bankruptcy trustee to pay creditors, including Thompson.

- **L.A. DECLINED TO PROSECUTE SO GOODWIN IS CHARGED OUT OF JURISDICTION:** Although the Thompson murders occurred in L.A. County, In 2001, Michael Goodwin, a highly successful promoter of the sport he created, Supercross, was arrested by the *Orange County* District Attorney, Tony Rackauckas. Rackauckas had been Campbell’s personal attorney at the time of the Thompson murders, even petitioning the court to change the time of death so Campbell would inherit a larger share of Thompson’s estate. Rackauckas was also Campbell’s longtime business associate and treasurer of her “victims’ rights advocacy organization.”

The L.A. Sheriff’s Department lead investigator, Mark Lillienfeld, had presented the case repeatedly to the L.A.D.A. who declined to prosecute due to insufficiency of evidence. Five days after Goodwin opened litigation against Campbell, he was arrested and charged by Campbell’s friend and associate, O.C.D.A. Tony Rackauckas. In 2004, The Fourth District Appellate Court ruled that the O.C.D.A had no evidence to prosecute Goodwin in Orange County and dismissed the case with a stinging rebuke of the D. A.

➤ **L.A.D.A. TOP PROSECUTOR USES PHONY EVIDENCE AGAINST GOODWIN:** Despite having declined prosecution for lack of evidence previously, 24 hours before Goodwin was to be released from the O.C. jail, the L.A.D.A suddenly announced they *were* now going to prosecute, on “new evidence.” The “evidence” the D.A. cited was exactly the same evidence that they had available when they repeatedly declined to prosecute.

There was no “new” *real* evidence so the top prosecutor for Los Angeles, Patrick Dixon, lambasted Goodwin’s defense with a fusillade of patently false allegations, counterfeit and forged evidence, massive evidence suppression, and false testimony by witnesses eager to participate in the \$1 million reward. Dixon and his assistant prosecutor, Alan Jackson also brought in dishonest “expert” witnesses and used other deceitful prosecution tricks on the defense. Goodwin’s defense was crippled and compromised early on by the trial judge’s unfathomable rulings prohibiting the jury from hearing the extensive evidence of the other suspects and Goodwin’s defense attorney’s refusal to use the evidence she had available to disprove Dixon’s specious charges.

Elena Saris was outgunned by Dixon, a 35-year veteran, *the* top L.A. prosecutor and his assistant, Alan Jackson, 15 years with the D.A.’s office who later was later named “Prosecutor of the Year” and, in the 2012 election, was a close runner-up to Jackie Lacey for the L.A. District Attorney position. Following the election, both Dixon and Jackson without explanation left the D.A.’s office. Saris was also unable to cope with an overtly biased judge who, having worked under the august Dixon, ruled consistently in favor of the prosecution. Comments about the trial judge’s rulings that so obviously favored the prosecution were published in the Orange County Register newspaper.

➤ **JUDGE PROHIBITS JURY FROM HEARING STRONG EVIDENCE OF OTHER SUSPECTS:**

The trial judge prohibited the jury from hearing the strong evidence of the many other suspects, including one who confessed twice, failed three lie detector tests, had no alibi and was identified near the crime scene the morning of the murders. Goodwin’s defense was barred from allowing the jury to hear virtually any of the *strong* evidence of other suspects. In a post-conviction sworn statement by the jury foreman outlining the important elements of how the verdict was reached, said, “...*if not Goodwin, then who?*”

➤ **GOODWIN BARRED BY BANKRUPTCY RULES FROM PAYING THOMPSON DIRECTLY:**

The prosecution falsely alleged that Michael ordered Mickey Thompson killed in order to avoid paying him. However, Goodwin *HAD* paid! Three months prior to the murders, Goodwin had deposited \$912,000 with the bankruptcy trustee with explicit instructions to pay Thompson and other creditors. Since he had been in **Chapter 11 Bankruptcy**¹ for 16 months prior to the murder, he was constrained by bankruptcy rules from paying Thompson directly without a special, very difficult to attain, court order only possible after agreement with other creditors, who, in this case, clearly told the trustee they most certainly would *not* agree. Those funds were irretrievable!² Goodwin would not have gained \$1 by having the Thompsons killed since the judgment would/did survive Thompson’s death.

The Goodwins’ assets, upon liquidation, provided over \$3 million to the bankruptcy. The total debt was under \$1.5 million which includes Thompson’s full \$794,000 judgment, although his lawyers agreed they would accept \$500,000, “*as more realistic.*” Over \$2.5 million in cash and assets were stolen, looted or squandered by the attorneys who had fiduciary duty to pay Thompson and other creditors. At least \$1 million of that in cash and assets were plundered by Thompson’s own lawyers and his sister Colleen Campbell, executrix of the Thompson estate. Campbell was later sued by Trudy Thompson’s family regarding Campbell’s administration of the estate. The trustees, attorneys and accountants charged \$49 for every \$1 that was paid to real general unsecured creditors other than to Thompson’s estate, which received only about \$120,000 from the \$3 million.

¹ **Chapter 11 Bankruptcy** is structured so that the debtor can reorganize and *pay* creditors, not, primarily, as in other forms of bankruptcy, to *discharge* debt.

² Goodwin has a document instructing the trustee that debt, including Thompson’s, was to be *paid*, not *discharged*.

➤ **EYEWITNESS ID CONSTITUTIONALLY INTOLERABLE:** The allegation of Goodwin “conducting surveillance” of the Thompson’s house before the murders is provably false, especially with recent investigation results. The Thompson house, 3/4 of a mile away, cannot be seen from where a couple alleged they saw a car with two men in it. During interviews with the couple, they stumbled on the race of the men in the car, the position of the car and other facts about the car and passengers. Finally, belatedly and suspiciously, with many contradictions between them, identified Goodwin as the person they had seen in the car. There is no evidence this was reported *before* the \$1 million reward was announced. While the “witnesses” *claimed* they were 8’ behind the car when they saw the person from the side for a few seconds, recent investigation proves they *could have been no closer than 23’*, possibly as far away as 50’. Despite the many disparities, 13 years later they identified Michael Goodwin in the courtroom as one of the persons they saw in the car after they earlier in the case had failed to identify Goodwin from a photo in a grouping of six photos, saying, “I can’t tell.” Goodwin has newly discovered evidence proving that he was not in that car, not there at all.

➤ **PROFOUND, DEMONSTRABLE ABUSES OF DISCRETION BY THE TRIAL JUDGE:** Judge Schwartz inexplicably gave the jury grossly improper and in at least two cases, *unlawful* instructions on what they could consider in reaching a verdict. Some elements of her instructions to the jury were clearly unlawful. Although the law demands evidence supporting for any jury instruction many of the judge’s instructions had *no* supporting evidence. The high standard of *beyond reasonable doubt* for the jury to find Goodwin guilty could not have been applied since *Goodwin was never tied to the murders or killers in any way, so a certainty---“beyond reasonable doubt”---that Goodwin was responsible for the murders was proven impossible.*

➤ **GOODWIN’S RIGHT TO A SPEEDY APPEAL WAS THWARTED BY THE GOVERNMENT:** *Such appeals generally take 18 to 36 months. The appellate court did not rule on Goodwin’s appeal for more than 8 years. The Superior Court and L.A. District Attorney had claimed they could not find their own records for many of those years. Goodwin filed 27 motions to get hundreds of documents, proved that the prosecution had them and suppressed them at trial, clearly supporting Goodwin’s claim of innocence. The government, the court nor Goodwin’s trial attorney has produced any of the suppressed documents. Some of those concealed-yet-known-to-exist documents, if identified as BRADY evidence, should result in reversal of the conviction or dismissal of the charges.*

All 17 points of Goodwin’s appeal were simply meaningless since 95% of the evidence in the “*search for truth*” was hidden by the D.A., not introduced at trial, and the appellate justices cannot depart from the court trial record in making their ruling. This trial was fraught with the prosecution’s blizzard of contrived evidence. Consequently, on January 26, 2015, Goodwin’s wrongful conviction was affirmed. However, grave doubts were expressed on several significant issues during the oral arguments, the justices’ Q&A session that preceded the court’s ruling. State Appellate Courts in general are noted for rubber-stamping lower court rulings.

➤ **EVIDENCE HIDDEN BY THE D.A. AND WITHHELD BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY:** In spite of 8 years of continued, concerted stalling by the L.A.D.A. and Superior Court, Goodwin has acquired dozens of pieces of exculpatory evidence from other sources, each of which should reverse the conviction if the law is followed. What is more, there is far more powerful evidence in the hands of his trial defense attorney that, though Goodwin is entitled to by law and has requested dozens of times, she has failed to hand over to Goodwin.

➤ **LEAD INVESTIGATOR BEING INVESTIGATED BY INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF L.A.S.D:** The lead investigator in Goodwin’s case, Det. Mark Lillienfeld, is being investigated by the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department “Professional Standards Division,” parent of Internal Affairs, for perjuries, destruction, manipulation and forgery of key evidence, subornation of perjuries, witness intimidation and other crimes he committed during the investigation, prosecution and trial. The Los Angeles District Attorney’s office has now assigned a special unit to provide the suppressed evidence for dozens of BRADY violations. Only one material violation is all that is required to overturn a conviction.