### SUPERIOR COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA EASTERN DISTRICT

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,

Docket Number

Appellee,

CP-51-CR-0113571-1982

v. :

Superior Court Docket Number 290 EDA 2019

Wesley Cook, aka Mumia Abu-Jamal:

:

Appellant.

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### APPELLANT'S MOTION FOR REMAND TO THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS TO CONSIDER NEWLY DISCOVERED EVIDENCE

Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal, through counsel, moves for a remand to the Court of Common Pleas so that he may present newly discovered evidence, which the Commonwealth first disclosed after the Court of Common Pleas issued its ruling on Mr. Abu-Jamal's pending PCRA petition. In support of this motion, Mr. Abu-Jamal states the following.

1. On December 27, 2018, the Court of Common Pleas (Tucker, J.) granted in part Appellant's fifth petition for relief under the Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA). The Court of Common Pleas ruled that Mr. Abu-Jamal's appellate rights in his previous four PCRA petitions must be reinstated due to the appearance of judicial bias because Justice Ronald Castille participated in deciding the appeals in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after denying Mr. Abu-Jamal's motions asking

for his recusal. The Court held that Justice Castille erred by denying Mr. Abu-Jamal's recusal motions because a letter Justice Castille wrote the Governor when he was the Philadelphia District Attorney—a letter withheld by the Commonwealth until these proceedings—demonstrated that Justice Castille had disqualifying bias in capital cases where the victim was a police officer. The Commonwealth has withdrawn its appeal of that ruling.

- 2. During the course of the proceedings in this PCRA petition, the Court of Common Pleas ordered the Commonwealth to produce its complete case file related to Mr. Abu-Jamal for in camera review, and the Commonwealth represented that it had done so.
- 3. However, on January 3, 2019, the Commonwealth wrote Judge Tucker a letter, stating that, on December 28, 2018, the District Attorney and members of his staff came across six boxes with the name "Mumia" or "Abu-Jamal" on them. (See Exhibit A.) In its January 3, 2019 letter, the Commonwealth acknowledged: "this means the Commonwealth's prior representations that it had produced the complete file for this Court's review in these cases were incorrect." *Id*.
- 4. Five of those boxes are labeled 18/29, 21/29, 23/29, 24/29, and 29/29, and the Commonwealth later represented that it has not located the remaining 24 out of 29 boxes in this series.

- 5. The Commonwealth agreed to defense counsel's request to review the contents of the six boxes. The Commonwealth also assured defense counsel that it would continue to look for any additional boxes, including the 24 out of 29 boxes that appear to be missing.
- 6. Undersigned counsel's review of the six boxes has revealed highly significant evidence, which the Commonwealth has never previously disclosed, establishing that Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial was tainted by a failure to disclose material evidence in violation of the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions.
- 7. First, documents in the boxes show, for the first time, that the prosecution promised its most important witness money in exchange for his testimony. Specifically, in a letter postmarked August 6, 1982, the prosecution's principal eyewitness, Robert Chobert, wrote Joseph McGill, the lead trial prosecutor, stating "I have been calling you to find out about the money own (sic) to me. So here is a letter finding out about money." (See Exhibit B.)¹ The suppression of evidence that a key witness for the State has been offered payment in connection with his testimony is a classic violation of Brady v. Maryland, 373 U.S. 84 (1963). See, e.g., Banks v. Dretke, 540 U.S. 668, 675, 678, 702 (2004) (capital penalty proceeding violated due process where State suppressed evidence that key witness

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Exhibit B contains a copy of the letter from Mr. Chobert to Mr. McGill and a copy of the envelope in which it came. Pursuant to a request from the Commonwealth, Mr. Chobert's street address has been redacted from the envelope.

had been paid approximately \$200); *Thomas v. Westbrooks*, 849 F.3d 659, 665 (6th Cir. 2017) (new trial required where State did not disclose a payment made to its key witness, because it deprived the defendant of his "right to impeach the State's witnesses against him on the grounds of pecuniary bias in the case") (citations omitted); *Schofield v. Palmer*, 621 S.E.2d 726, 731 (Ga. 2005) (new trial required because prosecution's suppression that key witness was paid prevented the defendant "from impeaching that witness with 'an age-old, logical, pecuniary argument that [he] had a motive to lie," and further recognizing that "the State must have also believed that knowledge of the payment would have affected its case against [the defendant] because it went to such great lengths to conceal it").

8. Second, material in the boxes reveals, for the first time, handwritten notes indicating that the lead trial prosecutor in Mr. Abu-Jamal's case was actively tracking the races of prospective jurors during juror selection, using the letters "B" or "N" to refer to Black jurors. See Exhibit C.<sup>2</sup> This was not previously disclosed and is strongly probative of a Batson violation. See, e.g., Foster v. Chatman, 136 S. Ct. 1737, 1744, 1748 (2016) (relying on notes showing that the prosecution was tracking the race of jurors in finding a Batson violation); Diggs v. Vaughn, No. 90-2083, 1991 WL 46319, at \*1 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 27, 1991) (in finding a Batson violation,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Exhibit C contains a copy of handwritten notes, apparently made by the trial prosecutor, during jury selection. Pursuant to the Commonwealth's request, the names of the venirepersons have been redacted. Each name has been replaced with a label that says, "Named Prospective Juror."

relying in part on notes showing that the prosecutor was tracking the race of prospective jurors, which indicated that race "featured very prominently in the thought processes of the trial prosecutor").

9. Third, the boxes contained at least eleven different memoranda and letters which disclose that after Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial, the District Attorney's Office, at its higher levels, made significant efforts to monitor and direct the outstanding prostitution charges against Cynthia White. (See Exhibit D.) Ms. White was the only witness at Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial other than Mr. Chobert who testified that she saw Mr. Abu-Jamal shoot Officer Faulkner. At the time of the trial, she had been working as a prostitute for a long time, was serving a prison sentence in Massachusetts, had as many as 38 prior arrests, and had 4-5 open criminal cases pending against her. (Tr. 6/21/82 at 80; Tr. 6/22/82 at 26.) Before and at Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial, the Commonwealth did not disclose that Ms. White had been offered any incentives to testify or that any promises were made to her concerning leniency in her outstanding cases. Material in the recently disclosed files suggest that incentives and promises were given. Memoranda in these files indicate that members of the District Attorney's Office paid special attention to Ms. White's upcoming prostitution cases, and each of these memoranda instructed the trial prosecutor to contact Joe McGill (lead prosecutor in Mr. Abu-Jamal's case) prior to trial. They also seek to facilitate her release from custody after her return to

Pennsylvania from Massachusetts. There can be no reason for a senior homicide prosecutor like Joe McGill to be involved in prosecuting prostitution charges in Municipal Court, other than to have a say over the handling of the cases, at least three of which were eventually dismissed. (*See* Exhibit D.)

- 10. A memorandum of particular concern was written from the Chief of the D.A.'s Municipal Court Unit to an Assistant D.A. in that Unit. (See Memorandum to Michael Weisberg from Andre Washington dated 12-6-82, Exhibit D.) The memorandum, written five months after the conclusion of Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial, instructs the trial D.A. that he has been assigned to Ms. White's prostitution cases and that she had been a witness in "the recent police shooting case tried by Joe McGill." The memo asserts that there were no specific deals worked out for her testimony, "so these [prostitution] cases should be vigorously prosecuted." Yet despite this protestation, the memo concludes by instructing the trial D.A. that, "before proceeding to trial please see A.D.A. Joseph McGill, in the Homicide Unit, and discuss this case." And, "if possible, arrange for an earlier date for trial." It concludes by telling the Municipal Court A.D.A to "keep me informed of your progress."
- 11. This new evidence, which the Commonwealth has suppressed for well over three decades, shows that Mr. Abu-Jamal's capital trial was fundamentally unfair and tainted by serious constitutional violations. Mr. Abu-Jamal respectfully

requests that this Court remand the case to the Court of Common Pleas so that Mr.

Abu-Jamal may litigate the claims arising from this new evidence.

12. A remand at this juncture would prevent inefficiency and the wasting

of judicial resources, particularly because the newly discovered evidence relates to

claims currently pending in these appeals, i.e., a *Batson* claim, and *Brady* claims

related to Mr. Chobert and Ms. White. It will be far more efficient for the parties

and the Court for these claims to be adjudicated based on a fully developed record

and in a single appeal to this Court (if necessary) rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

13. Counsel for the Commonwealth has informed undersigned counsel that

the Commonwealth will decide its position on this motion after reviewing the

motion.

WHEREFORE, Appellant requests that this Court remand this case so that the

Court of Common Pleas may consider the evidence first disclosed by the

Commonwealth after the ruling of the Court of Common Pleas reinstating Mr. Abu-

Jamal's PCRA appeals.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Judith Ritter

JUDITH L. RITTER

Pennsylvania Attorney ID# 73429

Widener University-Delaware Law School

4601 Concord Pike

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40 Rector Street, 5th floor
New York, New York 10006
Telephone: (212) 965-2200
E-mail: sspital@naacpldf.org

Counsel for Appellant, Mumia Abu-Jamal

Dated: September 3, 2019

#### **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the 'Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts' that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

/s/ Judith Ritter

Judith Ritter

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Judith Ritter, hereby certify that on this 3rd day of September 2019, I served a copy of the foregoing upon the following persons:

Office of the Philadelphia District Attorney
Three South Penn Square
Philadelphia, PA 19107
By: PACFile

/s/ Judith Ritter

Judith Ritter

## Exhibit A



#### DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

THREE SOUTH PENN SQUARE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19107-3499
(215) 686-8000

January 3, 2019

The Honorable Leon W. Tucker Supervising Judge - Criminal Suite 1201, Criminal Justice Center 1301 Filbert Street Philadelphia, Pa. 19107

> Re: Commonwealth v. Mumia Abu-Jamal, aka Wesley Cook CP-51-CR-9113571-1982 PCRA

Dear Judge Tucker,

I write to inform the Court of a development in this case.

On December 28, 2018, the D.A. and members of his staff went to a remote and largely inaccessible room of the District Attorney's Office marked "Storage," looking for office furniture. While there, they came across six file boxes, five of which were marked with the name "McCann." Edward McCann was a high-level supervisor in prior administrations. He left the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office in 2015. The boxes were also marked with the name "Mumia" or "Abu-Jamal" and one of the boxes was marked with the full name "Mumia Abu-Jamal." Five of the boxes contained one of the following designations: 18/29, 21/29, 23/29, 24/29, 29/29. The sixth had no numbering.

This means the Commonwealth's prior representations that it had produced the complete file for this Court's review in this case were incorrect, although those representations were based upon a diligent search and were accurate to the best of the Commonwealth's knowledge at the time. The Commonwealth had delivered to this Court 32 boxes for review, each marked in sequential order (1 of 32, 2 of 32, 3 of 32, etc.). According to the District Attorney's Office's database, these 32 boxes were the complete file for Mr. Abu-Jamal's case. Nothing in the Commonwealth's

database showed the existence of these six additional boxes. All entries in the database pre-date this administration.

We are in the process of reviewing these boxes. We regret this development. Should this Court wish to review the contents of these six boxes, we will provide them.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey Kavanagh Assistant District Attorney Supervisor, PCRA Unit 215-686-5707

Yearen Kron

cc: Judy Ritter, Esquire Samuel Spital, Esquire

## Exhibit B

Mr. Mc gill

It have been calling you to find out about the money own to me. —

So here is a letter, finding out about money. Do you need my to sign anything fow long well it take to get it. —

How was your week off good I hope. Set me know soon; write me back

Robert Chobert

# Exhibit C

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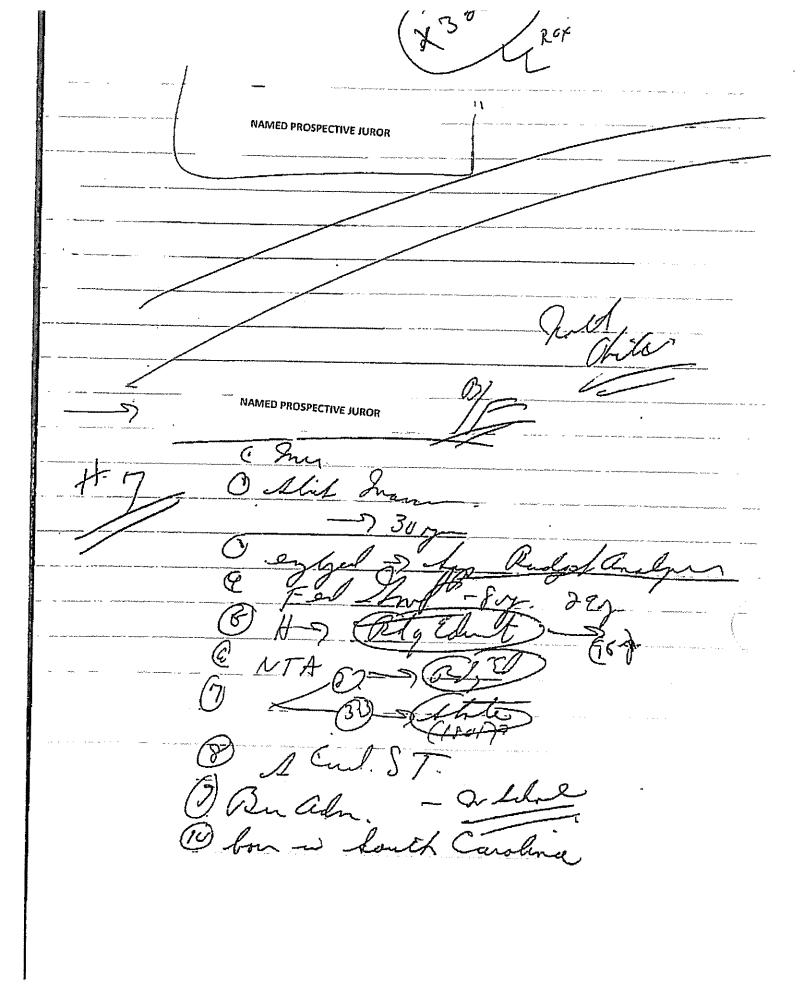
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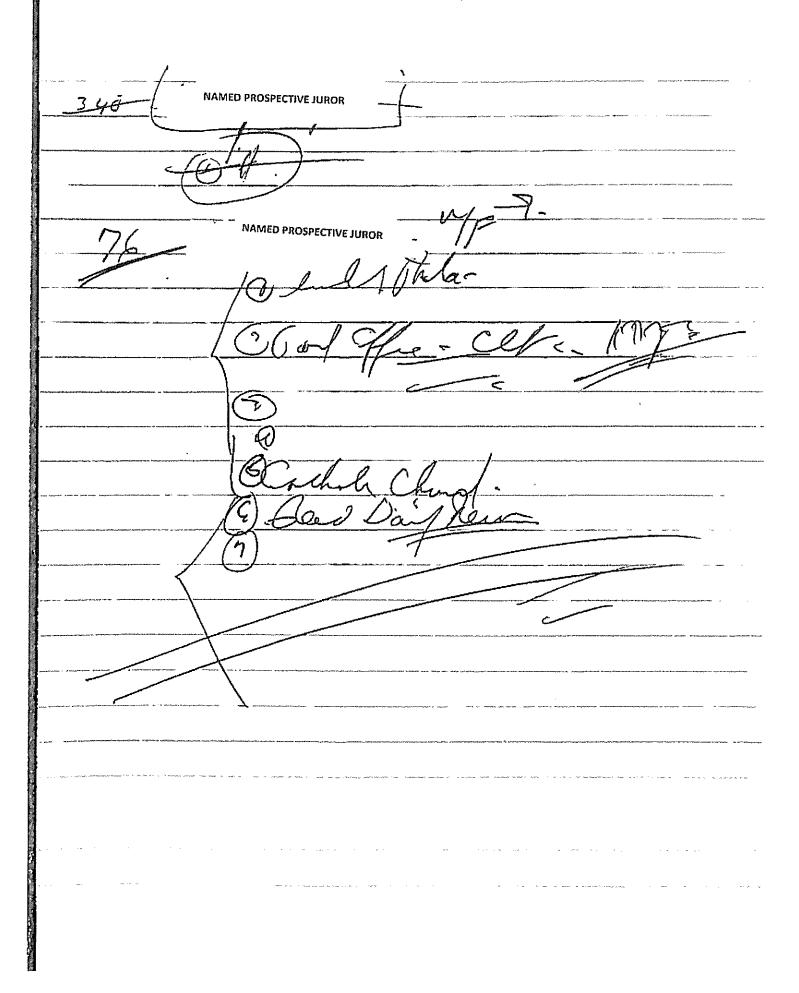
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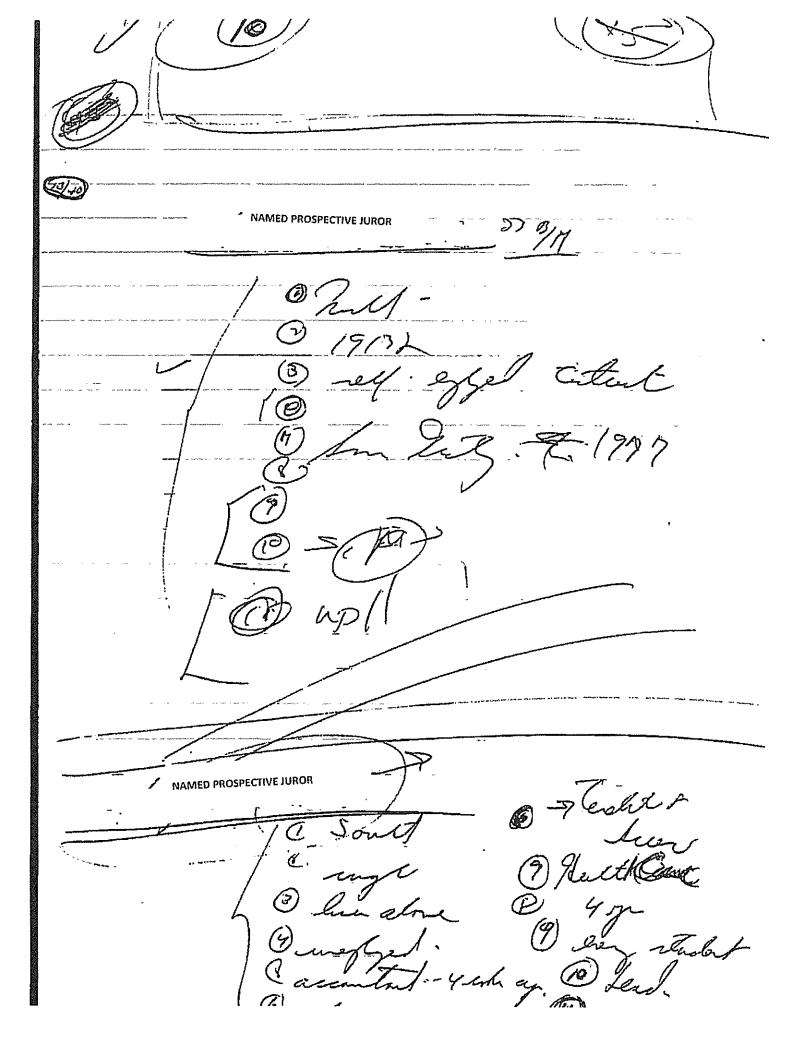
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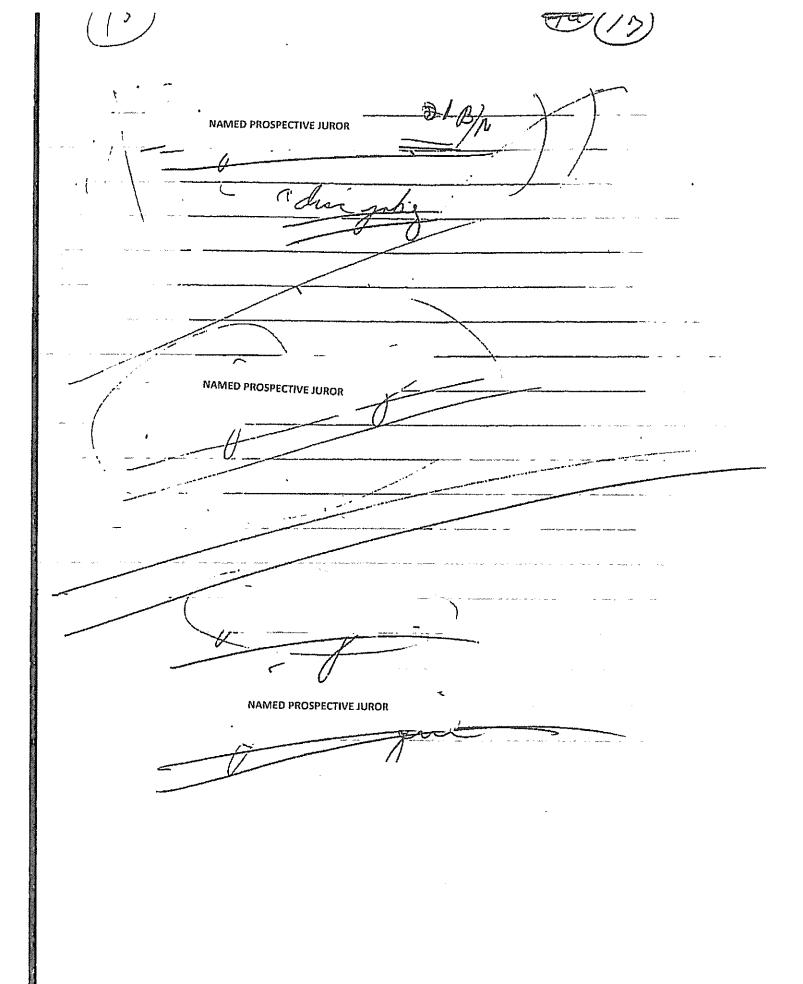
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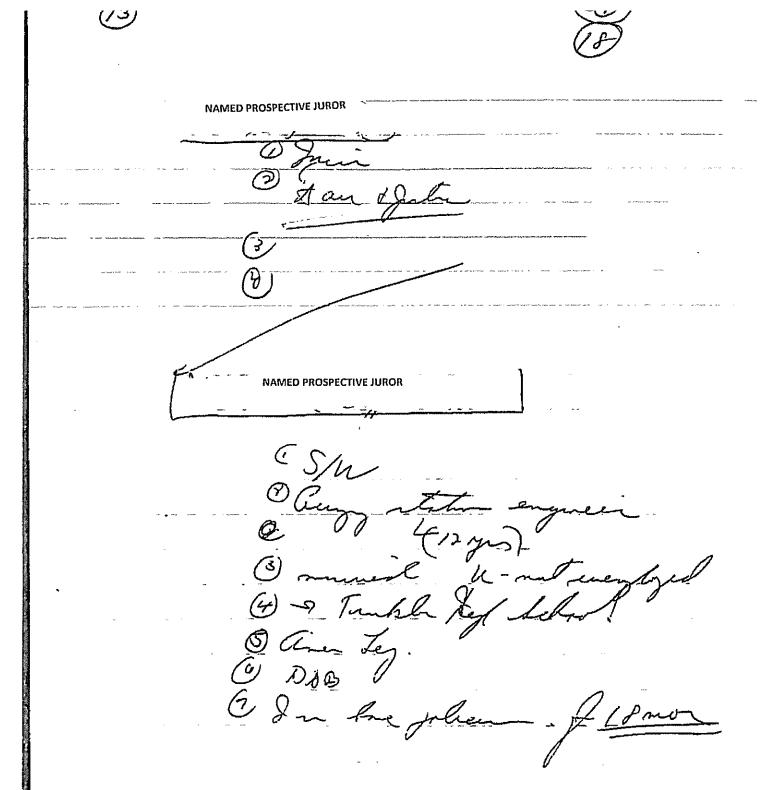
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## Exhibit D



#### DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

1300 CHESTNUT STREET
PHILADELPHIA PENNSYLVANIA 19107

September 17, 1982

Massachusetts State Parole Board c/o Thadine Johnson Institutional Parole Officer Massachusetts Correctional Institution Framingham, Massachusetts 01701

RE: Mildred Saunders; aka: Cynthia White

Dear Sir:

The above-named inmate is presently pending trial in Philadelphia on three charges of Prostitution. We have lodged detainers against her and intend to have her transferred to Philadelphia pursuant to the Interstate Agreement on Detainers Act for prosecution on these charges. It is my understanding that she may be comming up for parole in the near future. If the inmate is granted parole, we would still like to take custody pursuant to the Detainers Act, as I believe that she could be paroled to our detainers prior to the actual parole date. If the defendant is in our custody when her parole is granted she would be released from our custody, assuming that she posts bail on our charges. In any event, it appears that this is the fastest method to have her returned to our custody. Would you please let me know if the defendant can be paroled while in our custody?

Thank you for your assitance in this matter.

Richard DiBenedetto

Deputy

Intergovernment

Affairs

215-875-6422



Ms. Christine Hillman Records Officer Massachusetts Correctional Institution Framingham, Massachusetts 01701

Cynthia White, aka Mildred Saunders Our: MC8112 1285, Chg. Prostitution MC8110 0600, Chg. Prostitution MC8111 3925, Chg. Prostitution

Dear Ms. Hillman:

We had previously lodged copies of our Bench Warrants to act as Detainers against the above-named inmate who is presently serving a sentence at your Institution. As you are aware the inmate is presently in our custody in Philadelphia having been sent her pursuant to the Interstate Rendition of Witnesses Act. We expect to have her returned to your custody on or about September 20th, 1982. Since Miss White is in Philadelphia pursuant to the Interstate Rendition of Witnesses Act, we cannot prosecute her on the outstanding charges while she is here as a witness. However, I am enclosing a cor of our Form 5 Request for Temporary Custody under the Interstate Agreement on Detainers Act as we would like to have her returned to our custody for prosecution on these charges.

Would you please advise the inmate immediately upon receipt of this request for custody and determine whether she will waive the waiting period. I believe she will as she has indicated this to me. Once she waives the waiting period you will, of course, have to send me an offer to deliver custody and we will set up a date to have the inmate transferred to Philadelphia. If she is granted parole within the next two minths we would be willing to take custody of her before her parche can be paroled on her Massachusetts sentence : . The is in our custody. Could you please speak with the parole ... : ties in your jurisdiction and determine whether they will agree to this. If you have any further questions with regard to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

RICHARD DI BENEDETTO

Deputy, Intergovernmental

Affairs

### MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

12-5-82

FROM

Michael Weisberg, ADA, Municipal Court Unit

Andre Washington, Chief, Municipal Court Unit

chi

DATE

SUBJECT:

COMMONWEALTH V. CYNTHIA WHITE,

MC 81-11-3925, 81-10-600, 81-12-1285, LISTED: JANUARY 14, 1983, COURTROOM 275

You are specially assigned to prosecute the above-captioned cases at the Municipal Court Trial level. The defendant is charged with three separate counts of Prostitution and related offenses. The Public Defender represents the defendant.

This defendant was the witness in the recent police shooting case tried by Joe McGill. There were no specific deals worked out for her testimony, so these cases should be vigorously prosecuted. Please note that there is an outstanding Rule 6013 Petiton which will have to be litigated before trial. This defendant was previously incarcerated in Massachusetts and was transported originally to Philadelphia under the Inter-State Agreement as to witnesses. However, that Agreement indicates that the defendant cannot be tried for any outstanding cases in the jurisdiction to which she is being transported. Therefore, the defendant is considered to be unavailable. Consequently, the defendant was transported back to Massachusetts after the completion of her testimony and then we had to proceed under the Inter-State Agreement on detainers to have her transported back to Philadelphia.

For the purpose of the Rule 6013 Petition, vou will probably need Rich DiBenedetto to testify to his efforts in producing the defendant as well as having a copy of the Inter-State Agreement for witnesses available to provide the judge. Please ensure that all please note that each case is an individual incident. Therefore, all three cases cannot proceed unless there is a plea which can be worked out. There is no objection to a plea being agreed upon for these three cases. However, if the cases go to trial, then the defendant will have to have separate trial dates. You should try

Before proceeding to trial please see A.D.A. Joseph McGill, in the Homicide Unit, and discuss this case. If possible, arrange for an earlier date for trial. In order to do that, you will have to contact Steve Jaffe.

Please keep me informed of your progress.

A1/: cl

17 M

MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPH

DATE

11/1/82

то . Ed Wilbraham, Municipal Court Unit

FROM

Rich DiBenedetto, Extraditions

SUBJECT:

Cynthia White

MC 8111-3925 MC 8110-0600 MC 8112-1285 MC 8112-0810

This defendant was given a bench warrant hearing today and the above cases were relisted to January 14, 1983 in courtroom 275. Brad Richman had previously filed 6013 petitionds and wanted to get an early trial date when the defendant was returned. Since the trial commissioner listed the cases for January 14th, you may want to consider getting them re-listed to an earlier trial date if that is possible. Please have the assigned ADA contact Joe McGill prior to trial.

Patram Cb.
Palatha, Pha

### MEMORANDUM

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Edward Wilbraham, Chief, Municipal Court Unit

DATE 11/22/82

FROM : Alfred T. Little, Trial Services Director

SUBJECT:

Commonwealth v. Cynthia White

Case No. MC 8110-0600

Listed 1/14/83 Courtroom 275 Witness: Thomas W. Lawson

Witness Thomas Lawson has informed our office by return subpoena mailer post card that he has come down twice and was told by the bailiff that there is no need for him to come back.

This file is currently signed out to A.D.A. Joseph McGill of the Homicide Unit.

Please let us know if there is anything further we should do.

js

RESPONSE TO THIS MEMORANDUM MAY BE MADE HEREON IN LONGHAND

82-S-1A (Rev. 3/59)

ΤO

FROM

Sgt. Keaveny, Cell Room

DATE

10/1/82

SUBJECT: Rich DiFfenedetto, D.A.'s Office

Contrar Guite

alco: 1 11 drod Saunders

This defendant will be granted percle from the Missachusetts Correctional Freility in Fracincha on October 25th. Please pick her up at the institution on that day.

They to get an early listing clate once left has been returned per Brack

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8/31/82

From: Rich D: Beneditto

Re: Cepathus White

This Witness was

transported to our prison

significant today. Lt. Mattin

her in security.

FV: ADA WEISBERG SNB: CHNTHAWHITE PROSTUTION CASES On 4/28/83 in room 275, three Contain white prostitution casts were discharged by Indge Coppolino for lack of prosecution.

81/10-0600 WAS discharged after the Civilian witness failed to appear. The witness was appear. The Witness WAS properly served. to the arresting officer having left the police force. The judge hourd not give the Commonwealth another Sprorthnith to untact the officer.

Silli-3995 was discharged by

Online forpoline on the motion

of the Indic Defender, who gryned

that, a though the defendant had tailed to spear, Indicial economy dictated that no more time or money be expended on capturing This defendant on such a minor charge As to all three cases at am on record as to the amount of more and time expended upon expradition; court of notices to police officers for this listing and, service on the civilian for this listing. -Mil Went