

## 5 years- No Appeal Yet on Thompson Murder Conviction?

Though the actual shooters were never captured and he was never connected with the crimes, Michael F. Goodwin was convicted in January of 2007 of ordering the murders of Mickey Thompson and his wife Trudy, gunned down in their driveway in March of 1988. Goodwin, who created the sport of motocross racing in NFL stadiums called Supercross, was sentenced to two consecutive life-without-parole terms. He has always maintained his innocence, claiming a conspiracy between the District Attorneys of Los Angeles, Orange County, law enforcement, and Thompson's family. He contends that he has proof of this conspiracy but just cannot get before a court.

Goodwin and Mickey Thompson, a motorsports racing legend, having earned the title "Fastest Man on Earth," fought in the courts for more than three years over control of the highly profitable Supercross events after an aborted attempt to merge their businesses. Goodwin staged the first major Supercross event in 1972 at the L.A. Coliseum and went on to produce events around the country. Thompson ultimately prevailed in gaining rights for the most prestigious of Goodwin's events, Anaheim Stadium, host to 70,000 motocross fans annually. Finally, the courts awarded Thompson a \$500,000 judgment against Goodwin.

Prosecutors alleged that it was this judgment, having grown to more than \$700,000 with interest and penalties, that was Goodwin's motivation to have the Thompsons murdered. They allege that, to avoid paying the judgment and that Thompson's award of rights to the sport's most profitable event so enraged Goodwin that he contracted the murders.

Goodwin now says, "...I have more than enough evidence to prove my innocence and free me, if I could just finally get into court." His attorney, Gail Harper, was appointed by the court to file Goodwin's appeal in June of 2007 and, although Goodwin unsuccessfully attempted to replace Harper in 2010 with another appeal attorney, no appeal has been filed. When asked to explain the 4 ½ years that has elapsed, Ms. Harper declined to comment. In a 12/19/11 pleading to the court for an additional extension, Harper indicated that it had been "...necessary to conduct record settlement proceedings ....consisting of an additional 418 ages...[finally] filed on 9/20/11." Goodwin contends that prosecutors withheld this material to intentionally delay his appeal.

Goodwin has reported several inexplicable "lapses" in payment of fees to his attorney by the State and she stated to the court that she had to "...set Appellant's Opening Brief in this case aside to work on other cases so as to maintain some income." Goodwin contends that, among other trial errors, crucial evidence was withheld, key prosecution witnesses perjured themselves, law enforcement manufactured evidence and altered critical forensics in the case. Goodwin did show, in 2004, that the lead evidence in his arrest affidavit was false and it was subsequently dropped from the case.

Goodwin's attorney has indicated that she has now "...identified at least 20 potential issues..." and is working on Goodwin's appeal for filing soon, her last extension was granted to December 29.

The compelling questions that have been posed to Justice On Trial, a 10-year old advocacy organization are: why has an appeal on this case taken more than 4 ½ years for an appeal? Why were key documents, 418 pages, initially unavailable to the appellate attorney resulting in years of unnecessary time to file his appeal? Are prosecutors, as Goodwin alleges, blocking his appeal?