

In April 1984 I began a short lived business relationship with famed and controversial race car driver, promoter and inventor Mickey Thompson. Almost four years later Mickey and his wife Trudy were tragically murdered on March 16, 1988 outside their home in Bradbury, east of Los Angeles.

Almost nineteen years later I was convicted on January 4, 2007 of ordering Mickey and Trudy's murders, even though no physical, forensic, eyewitness or confession evidence connected me to the crime. I was sentenced to two life sentences, with no chance of parole. I now live in a concrete and steel small box.

The killing of the Thompsons' and my trial, conviction, sentencing were media events that generated at least 22 national TV specials across all networks. Coverage included CBS' *48 Hours*, NBC's *Unsolved Mysteries*, ABC's *Hard Copy*, Fox's *Million Dollar Mysteries*, ABC's *Good Morning America*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Time*, *People*, *Car and Driver*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, and *Hot Rod*, plus thousands of electronic and print clips, both local and national. A book about the case is scheduled for release in November 2013.

I had been cleared of all charges in December 1988, after the police conducted around 600 interviews during their investigation of the murders. The prosecution has never disclosed the reports or transcripts for around 450 of those interviews.



Michael Goodwin before his prosecution.

Mickey's sister, Colleen Campbell, has powerful political connections in Orange County, California. She was on the Republican National Committee, was four times Chair of the California Peace Officers Training and Procedures Committee, and much more. For example, she spoke to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee in 2009.

In December 2001 – 13-1/2 years after Mickey and his wife were murdered – I filed a multi-million dollar lawsuit in Orange County against Ms. Campbell that alleged she had stolen more than a million dollars from my federally protected pension and my business. Three days later I was charged in Orange County with the first-degree murders of Mickey and his wife, even though

The Tragic Murders Of Mickey and Trudy Thompson – The Michael Goodwin Story

By Michael Goodwin

the crimes were committed in Los Angeles County. Campbell's ex-personal lawyer, business associate, political ally and close friend Anthony Rackauckas was the Orange County District Attorney who filed the charges against me. In fact Rackauckas had been Ms. Campbell's attorney in handling Mickey Thompson's estate.

Three years later I was freed in 2004 by the California Court of Appeals that ruled, "there was no evidence to justify charging Goodwin in Orange County to start with." The court's ruling resulted in a banner headline in the *Orange County Register*, "Goodwin Going Home."

The same day I was released after 30 months in the Orange County Jail I was charged with the murders in Los Angeles County.

The evidence on which I was charged in Los Angeles was not only less evidence than when I was previously cleared in a 1988 Los Angeles Sheriff's Department report, but it was less evidence than upon which the Los Angeles District Attorney had previously and repeatedly rejected my prosecution due to a lack of evidence. The last "new" witness identified was on February 15, 1989, so every trial witness was known for at least 17-1/2 years before my trial started in 2006.

I was excluded by DNA tests conducted prior to my trial of Trudy's nail clippings that identified the DNA profile of an unknown person. But the DNA of a hair found at the crime scene was not tested, and the LA Sheriff's Department didn't check the lead of a suspicious car even though they had its license plate number.

Los Angeles Sheriff's Detective Michael Griggs was the first lead detective in the Thompson murder investigation. In 1988 Griggs was ordered by his superiors to stop investigating the primary suspect who had been identified as having links to the Thompson murders. The suspect was identified by two witnesses as having been near the crime scene on the morning of the murders, and two other witnesses reported he

confessed to the crime. This suspect failed three lie detector tests. He had no ties to me.

Although there was no evidence linking me to the crimes Griggs was ordered to pursue me as the prime suspect.

Colleen Campbell and her husband posted a one million dollar reward in 1998 for information leading to the conviction of anyone involved in the Thompson murders.

Every witness who testified at my preliminary hearing or trial about issues that helped the D.A. convict me radically changed their story from initial statements that were either neutral or tended to support my innocence, or they told a new story that they didn't tell the police when they were interviewed after the murders in 1988.



Trudy and Mickey Thompson

One to the things that hampered my defense was the LA County District Attorney didn't disclose more than 250 pieces of evidence, plus more than 300 police reports and witness statements for confirmed interviews with witnesses.

For the first nine years of the investigation after the murders, the first two lead investigators both focused on me and could find nothing to link me to the murders.

Detective Mark Lillienfeld was assigned as a lead investigator in 1997. He immediately announced with no new or supporting evidence, and with the most recent L.A.S.D. report clearing me, "Goodwin did it."

Twenty-six witnesses changed their stories after Det. Lillienfeld spoke with them — and after the million dollar reward was posted. Some of those witnesses even contradicted their earlier statements they had given that supported my innocence.

Among Det. Lillienfeld's tactics to try and implicate me in Mickey and Trudy's murders was he 'reversed' the order of their deaths with Trudy being killed first to make it appear Mickey was made to suffer so there would be a 'revenge' motive in his death. He also created phantom black killers on bicycles when every crime scene witness had reported a white shooter (No crime scene witness reported blacks or bikes at the crime scene.). To do that he relied on six witnesses who 'spoke out' against me for the first time

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thirteen years after the crime and only after the \$1 million reward was offered. The non-inculpatory audio taped statements those six witnesses testified to giving prior to the offering of the reward and before being interviewed by Det. Lillenföld have disappeared. Those witnesses said that a few days prior to the crime they saw me 2-½ miles from the crime scene, where another witness saw black bike riders that morning. However, initially suppressed and newly discovered evidence proves both that I was not where the witnesses claimed to have seen me, and that the black riders seen near that location were not the killers. Det. Lillenföld's speculations about the crime were worthy of the plot in a fictional pulp novel.

I am told that I was the first person in the U.S. history to be convicted of "ordering a hit", when the killers were never identified or found. We don't even know what race they were, for sure. No forensic, physical or confession evidence connected me to the crime. It was stipulated I was not at or near the scene of the crime. There was no murder weapon, DNA evidence, tape recordings, letters, documents, phone records or photographs tying me to whoever shot the Mickey and Trudy or to doing anything to help, assist or further their deaths. Although there



Mickey Thomson with Challenger One in which he went over 406 mph in 1960 at the Bonneville Salt Flats.

was absolutely no evidence introduced during my trial I was connected to a conspiracy or that there even was a conspiracy, the judge gave a conspiracy jury instruction. And evidence that wasn't disclosed by the DA proves *the allegations* supporting my guilt are fraudulent and knowingly perpetrated by the DA.

In summary, the ultimate issue that allowed my wrongful conviction was the DA's failure to disclose the 250+ pieces of material favorable material evidence, in addition to the more than 300 police reports and witness statements for confirmed interviews with witnesses. The concealment of that evidence prevented meaningful cross examination and impeachment of the testimony of the prosecution witnesses. Thus, there was no true 'adversarial testing' of the prosecution's case as is anticipated and guaranteed

by the California and U.S. Constitutions. Consequently, I was convicted of a crime I didn't commit and when there is no reliable evidence supporting my guilt.

My 472-page direct appeal brief was filed in November 2012 in the California Court of Appeals, which is considering my appeal. The brief raises 17 prejudicial trial errors that require a new trial, including extensive and outrageous police and prosecutor misconduct that deprived me a fair trial. My brief can be read or downloaded at, http://occopytech.com/images/B197574_AOB_Goodwin.pdf

Commentary on this case and links to many fine articles on my case and on other similar cases can be found on a blog site run by my friends and supporters at, www.friendsofmichaelgoodwin.blogspot.com

I can be written at,
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Prisoners can be transferred at any time. To verify my current location search for "Michael Goodwin" on the California DOC's inmate locator at, www.inmatelocator.cdcr.ca.gov/default.aspx

Declarations of Gail Harper

Gail Harper, Esq. is Michael Goodwin's court appointed appellate lawyer, and prior to filing his 472-page appeal brief she filed several requests for an extension of time supported by her declaration detailing aspects of the case.

Declaration of Gail Harper, May 3, 2012

9) I have reviewed the approximately 300-page record of the Orange County proceedings that took place before the Orange County prosecution was stopped by the Court of Appeal, Fourth District, for lack of jurisdiction and the LADA picked up the case. This review was necessary because the two prosecutions involved the same Los Angeles County investigators, one of whom at the very least repeatedly made admittedly false statements and likely perjured himself regarding a critical and non-existent "fact" purportedly linking Mr. Goodwin to the Thompson murders in order to obtain search and arrest warrants, and to have Mr. Goodwin bound over for trial.

10) This is the most difficult and complex appeal I have ever worked on. ... patterns of judicial error and prosecutorial misconduct have emerged that must be addressed in addition to the issues I have previously described to this Court. The prosecutorial misconduct in this case was pervasive. ... There are also numerous evidentiary errors, resulting in exclusion of crucial defense evidence, and admission of inadmissible and prejudicial prosecution evidence.

Declaration of Gail Harper, June 5, 2012

6) ... One difficulty with this case is that the murders occurred in 1988, and since that time two distinct groups of investigators took radically different approaches. The second group was heavily influenced by a politically connected family member, and extensive misconduct occurred. ... Another difficulty is that two jurisdictions were involved, Orange County and Los Angeles County. Orange County attempted unsuccessfully to prosecute Mr. Goodwin, and that attempt gives rise to multiple complex issues regarding prosecutorial misconduct and fundamental issues of due process I have never before encountered. ... The case also presents multiple issues of prosecutorial misconduct, erroneous evidentiary rulings and instructional errors. Ultimately, the case, which has all the additional complexities of a prosecution based on conspiracy, raises issues related to insufficiency of the evidence in an extraordinarily convoluted factual context.

7) ... There were multiple changes of testimony by several of the witnesses over years of prior proceedings ...

8) The record is more than 13,000 pages in length, plus voluminous exhibits. A total of 48 witnesses testified during a 35-day jury trial. There were 67 motions, oppositions and replies to motions, some of them extremely complex, with accompanying exhibits.

(Declarations filed in *California vs. Michael Frank Goodwin*, No. 2 Crim. B197574, The Court Of Appeal Of The State Of California Second Appellate District, Division Eight)