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COURT ORDERS EVIDENTIARY HEARING IN CASE OF WRONGFULLY CONVICTED STATE COLLEGE MAN

SUPPORTERS OF SUBU VEDAM CHEER RULING AS A MAJOR MILESTONE IN HIS 42-YEAR BID FOR EXONERATION AND FREEDOM FROM PRISON

After spending more than four decades in prison for a crime he did not commit, Subramanyam "Subu" Vedam, a State College man wrongfully convicted of murder in 1983, has been awarded an evidentiary hearing based on long-concealed evidence that exonerates him.

In a decision issued Tuesday, Centre County Court of Common Pleas Judge Jonathan D. Grine ruled that Vedam is entitled to an evidentiary hearing after his attorneys discovered earlier this year that prosecutors had withheld a crucial FBI report that undermined a fundamental aspect of the case they brought against him in the 1980 murder of Thomas Kinser.

The decision represents a significant step in Vedam's unwavering quest for justice since his 1982 arrest for the crime. He was wrongfully convicted a year later and sentenced to life without parole at HCI Huntingdon. If he prevails in his effort to vacate his conviction, he would become the longest-serving inmate in Pennsylvania history to be exonerated.

"We are profoundly heartened by Judge Grine's decision to award a hearing on key claims that prove Subu's innocence," said Gopal Balachandran, attorney for Vedam. "This is the first time in the long effort to attain justice for Subu that a post-conviction evidentiary hearing has been granted in one of his post-conviction claims, and that's because we finally have access to the evidence the original prosecutor should have, but did not, turn over to Subu's trial lawyers.

Vedam was a longtime State College resident and a Penn State student when he was wrongfully convicted in 1983. In a case scarce on evidence – no eyewitnesses to the crime testified, no exact date of death was proven, and no murder weapon was recovered – prosecutors attempted to connect Vedam to Kinser's death through a 25-caliber gun that purportedly matched the victim's wounds.

But in January, Vedam's legal team was permitted access to the prosecution's full case file and learned that former Centre County District Attorney Ray Gricar had concealed the existence of an

FBI analysis showing glaring inconsistencies between the size of the fatal wound and a .25 caliber bullet.

Nonetheless, Gricar allowed an FBI agent to misrepresent the findings of that analysis during testimony at Vedam's trial. Grine agreed with Vedam's attorneys that those actions could be tantamount to abetting perjury and may have violated Vedam's constitutional due process rights.

"The Court determines that there are genuine issues of material fact regarding whether the Commonwealth presented perjured testimony in this regard," Grine stated in his decision.

The ruling comes after Vedam's attorneys in August submitted to the court a report from one of the nation's leading forensic experts, who corroborated doubts about the integrity of Vedam's conviction. Dr. Ann H. Ross, a forensic anthropologist who has consulted extensively with law enforcement agencies across the country, including the Pennsylvania State Police, found that Kinser was killed by a .22-caliber bullet shot from a rifle – not by a .25-caliber bullet prosecutors attempted to link to Vedam.

In recent years local support for Vedam's innocence has burgeoned, with yard signs advocating for his plight displayed around Centre County and a capacity crowd of more than 200 supporters filling a July hearing on his case.

A status conference to prepare for the evidentiary hearing in the case is scheduled for 11:30 AM on Tuesday, October 15th.