

Restless Again

By
Cat West

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Overtured

The Great Northern Innocence Project WINS

The team at GNIP headed by Jim Mayer has a victory for Werner Kunkel. The ruling has come down that Werner Kunkel's conviction has been overturned.

Your local and regional media should have all the details for you in their publications and TV programs.

I cannot say enough about the great work done by the GNIP in Werner's case. The best of the best and what I feel makes them great is their desire to right the wrongs committed against the innocent. It's more than just education and skills, it's passion. This kind of result comes from a dedication you can't find just anywhere.

Werner's case now will either be retried, or he will be freed. I doubt the prosecution would want the humiliation of trying the case they never should've in the first place, a second time.

When you stop to think about all the times his appeals were crushed, and if you knew even a fraction of the abuses heaped upon him while in prison, and how he even went on a hunger strike because he had run out of hope, to now realize he will be walking as a free man after more than 35 years of wrongful conviction and imprisonment, you would have a better sense of how impossible this outcome was against all the obstacles hurled on the path, would have predicted.

Werner was not a known man. He had no celebrities championing his cause. He only had a dedicated family, an outsider who looked at his case and decided to get involved, and convinced Werner to have hope.

When the GNIP got involved, they got personally involved. This wasn't just a case or an exercise, this was a cause and they took it on, lived it, breathed it, dreamt it and worked it with picks and shovels of their trade, until they broke through to the motherlode.

In the Werner Tab you can find links to previous write ups. The Fargo Forum's Pat Springer did one of the most in-depth series of articles on this case, and the connections to Eddie Peltier's murder, and it's worth a re-read if you already read it last year. If not, go into the archives and get a good look at it.

What I've Seen

Personally, I hope that when cases like this get the attention and a hearing, and the result is the conviction is overturned, that it will begin the domino effect in all directions: Look at other convictions by prosecution teams headed by Lonnie Olson and see if there are common 'errors' in procedures that might point to an unjust conviction.

Look at other heinous murders in the region and see if there might be some commonalities involved. I.e., horrific in scale, unsolved for a long time, suddenly a suspect with no motive, no means, and no clue is dropped into the picture, usually someone with no financial means to protect themselves, and a conviction based on faulty evidence, perjured testimony, or coerced testimony.

I remember that in the kangaroo court of Judge Benson, the spectacle of 11 defendants who were not socially connected, did not like each other, each with at least 1 or 2 attorneys of their own, crowding the courtroom well, and a jury that had no, zero, none, nada single Native American on the jury, and had two coerced witnesses in the gallery, who were in protective custody of James Yankton, his brothers, and a handful of corrupt FBI agents, sitting in that gallery, with broken ribs, arms, noses, blackened eyes—clearly beaten up... and the reason presented was that sometimes you had to be more aggressive to get at the truth... was perfectly acceptable to that jury, and of course to Judge Benson.

Benson at the time was in the early but obvious stages of dementia, but his racism was fully present.

There have been grotesque miscarriages of justice not just in Indian Country, but throughout the US and Canada. Without the Innocence Projects throughout the country,

our For Profit Prison System would have no one really pushing back against the tide of corruption and injustice.

The Stain

The whole system has to change. For Profit Prisons are wrong. Neither crime nor incarceration should be for profit. Not in any moral society. There are countries that do much better with their prisons and their societies are better off for it.

Presently, the for profit prison system is building concentration camps to warehouse hundreds of thousands of people who have committed no crimes, had no day in court, have no access to council and whose families have no idea where they are. A few good friends and big donors to the Republican President and his pals, are rubbing their hands together like insects preparing for a feast. The stain upon the USA is spreading.

So, with this outcome of the hearing that was held in January, I again have hope that more dominos will fall, more will be exposed. That each case that comes to light will cause the Good People of North Dakota and elsewhere to take a peek behind the curtains and see what else waits to be uncovered.

The world is dealing with the fallout from the Epstein Files, and people in high places are being forced to resign, are being arrested, and have tumbled from grace into the dirt. They all thought they were immune. It went on for decades.

And we are not seeing all. We've only been given a fraction of what is there. Trump's name is mentioned over one million times, yet he's declaring himself 'exonerated' and his corrupt DOJ is aiding and abetting hiding him and his friends, from accountability.

Decades of Epstein abusing and trafficking women and children to hook the powerful, the influential have now revealed the hidden crime rate which always existed but only a few, and their surviving victims, knew about. And nobody listened to the victims—until now. And now we are beginning to see the scale of it all. Tip of the iceberg is an understatement.

Powerful people and people who crave power, are easily corrupted by money or sex or taboo indulgences. Indian Country and the Good People who live there, have been surviving despite the corruption around and above them. I guess if you look at how the

legal system has been corrupted, abused or misused against them, you could say the very foundation below them is also crunchy.

When the laws are fair, and apply to all, and no one is above the law, crime will go down.

Listen to Indian Country. They have a story to tell. You may think it only affects them, but like the Epstein Files, the effect is far ranging and affects us all.

Support The Innocence Project in your area. Support The Innocence Projects everywhere.

And let's all stand behind Werner and his family as they navigate the next phase of this process.

They are the quintessential everyman. Same hopes, dreams, morals, ethics, and they are just now seeing daylight from their long, long nightmare.

I see Pat Springer of the Fargo Forum has already published an article. Go read it!

You know where to find me.

~Cat