

UD 425

STATEMENT OF DENNIS DECHAIINE
REGARDING
INSTANCES OF UNFAIR PROSECUTORIAL PRACTICES
February 2025

1. I was arrested for the murder of Sarah Cherry in July of 1988. At that time, I owned a successful farming operation in the town of Bowdoinham and operated a produce and greenhouse business at Cook's Corner in Brunswick. Upon my arrest, prosecutors successfully worked with an attorney for the Cherry family to attach my assets. In effect, before a trial was even scheduled, I was deprived of the hard-earned financial resources I needed to defend myself.
2. On the evening of Sarah Cherry's disappearance, I voluntarily offered State Police access to my pick-up truck, with an explanation from Detective Alfred Hendsbee that a meticulous forensic examination of my vehicle would either implicate me in the crime or free me from suspicion. Despite the fact that no hair, fiber, fingerprints were found in my truck, and despite the fact that a State Police tracking dog failed to find Sarah Cherry's scent in or around my vehicle, I was arrested for murder.
3. Despite the fact that whoever murdered Sarah took her underwear, I was arrested even though the police knew that I never possessed that crime scene item.
4. Prior to trial, when I learned about the value of genetic testing of crime scene evidence, with financial help from family and friends, I offered to pay for DNA testing. Prosecutor Eric Wright successfully argued against allowing that testing.
5. Shortly after my conviction, while I was still arguing for the right to conduct DNA testing, Prosecutor Fern LaRochelle signed an order to incinerate the crime scene evidence I was attempting to have tested. My attorney was never advised of the pending destruction of evidence and the order to incinerate was secreted in a sealed file in the AG's Office, which was revealed only because of special legislative action granting me access to that sealed file. If Mr. LaRochelle believed what he was doing was ethically defensible, then why keep it secret and hide the order in a sealed file?
6. Numerous hair strands were found at the crime scene and during the autopsy. Hair samples were taken from me while I was held at the Lincoln County Jail. No comparison report was ever produced of my hair to crime scene hair as part of the state's discovery. Why?
7. Prosecutor Wright ordered State Police Detective Steve Drake to interview the sister of an alternate suspect in this case. Although a State Police Log secreted in the AG's sealed file confirmed that an interview took place, no copy of that interview was ever provided to me (please see attached sheets addressing that issue, along with others).
8. When physical evidence in my case began to undermine prosecutors' narratives, they fabricated evidence to justify a conviction. After the attorney I initially consulted suffered a debilitating stroke (George Carlton), prosecutors accused me of having confessed to him. No mention of that so-called confession was made prior to George Carlton's stroke. In effect, prosecutors launched that accusation several years after my conviction and only after George was unable to defend himself from that allegation (see attached letters to AG Frey for greater detail).

9. In closing arguments, when Prosecutor Wright addressed the lack of physical evidence connecting me to victim Sarah Cherry, and her to me, he attributed that lack of evidence to God, a clear violation of my Constitutional right to a fair trial.
10. The enclosed letters to AG Frey regarding instances of prosecutorial misconduct clearly show that policing prosecutors via the AG is improbable, if not impossible. Although Prosecutor Macomber did write to me stating that he could not find the statement made by the sister of an alternate suspect (he offered no remedial suggestions), AG Frey was nonresponsive to my letters, indicating the need for a Conviction Integrity Unit outside of the AG's purview. More importantly, the very fact that a string of AGs condoned creating and protecting sealed files in criminal cases is problematic. How can we possibly trust Attorneys General to weigh in fairly on wrongful incarcerations when they support keeping important exculpatory evidence hidden in sealed files?