

June 2020 Press Release from Jason Carter

On June 19, 2015, Jason Carter walked into the kitchen of his parents' rural Lacona, Iowa farmhouse and discovered his mother lying on the floor shot to death. The homicide investigation focused on Jason and failed to follow up on leads and evidence. The ignored leads included: the possible location of the murder weapon, confessions of involvement by other individuals with known criminal histories, and motive and descriptions of the crime that aligned with evidence discovered at the scene. This information and the failure to investigate these leads was hidden from Jason and from his family. Instead, law enforcement told Jason's family that Jason committed the murder. This included making false implications about evidence.

In January 2016, Jason's father lead a wrongful death suit against Jason. The lead DCI Agent (the same one who made false implications about Jason Carter) testified against Jason in the December 2017 civil trial. Importantly, information regarding the failure to follow up on tips, the confessions from other individuals, and the motive of other individuals were never heard by the civil jury because the state had not disclosed that information.

Three days after the civil judgment, Jason was arrested and charged with first degree murder. During investigation in the criminal case, Jason's legal defense team discovered law enforcement's failures to follow leads, failure to correctly document and account for witness statements, failure to record and disclose confessions from other individuals, and failure to disclose the motive of those other individuals for the murder. The legal team further discovered evidence of law enforcement's purposeful actions and statements to Jason's family to turn his own father and siblings against him to manipulate the civil suit and judgment.

Armed with this evidence, in March of 2019, Jason Carter was acquitted of all charges related to the death of Shirley Carter.

In December of 2019, Jason filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against the lead case investigator, Marion County, and other individuals alleging conspiracy and numerous other violations of his constitutional rights stemming from the purposeful nondisclosure of evidence in the original civil suit against Jason.

This week, Jason filed a lawsuit against the State of Iowa in the Iowa District Court for Polk County, alleging violations of his constitutional rights, tortious infliction of severe emotional distress, negligent and wrongful investigation, and abuse of process, among other claims.

Jason Carter explains the lawsuit:

“Five years ago, my family was torn apart by my mother’s murder, and the lead investigator accusing me of a crime I did not commit,” says Jason Carter. “It has been more than a year since I was acquitted and the evidence of the State’s failures came to

light; yet, the State refuses to investigate my mother's murder. The State has confessions, witness lists, and a motive, and still my family does not have justice. I do not want any other family to go through the pain that mine has suffered."

Jason Carter's attorneys are Christine Branstad and Nathan Olson of Branstad & Olson Law Office, Alison Kanne of Wandro & Associates, and Glen Downey, of Glen S. Downey Law Offices, all of Des Moines. Carter's attorneys state: "This case is about intentional and reckless actions, grievous errors in investigation, purposeful manipulation, and knowingly false statements that pitted family members against family members, all while investigators ignored information on the real suspects and unconstitutionally caused this family to continue to suffer. The State of Iowa allowed its employees to ignore tips and other information provided very early in the investigation. Had investigators followed information, it would have led to viable suspects, additional evidence, and even outright confessions from individuals with direct and specific knowledge of the murder. Instead, investigators focused solely on Jason as the suspect, which led to failure to investigate the murder. Investigators continued to focus on Jason despite alibi information and timelines essentially eliminating Jason as a suspect. Investigators purposefully ignored evidence that pointed at other suspects who did not have an alibi. In response, our team took action to correct these errors."

Regarding this new lawsuit, Jason's attorneys explain: "This lawsuit against the State of Iowa is an attempt to correct both the actions of the investigators, and to correct procedures at the State level which created a system in which these egregious investigation failures were allowed to occur. We continue to litigate Jason's claims against the investigators in federal court; this new suit in state court provides Jason the opportunity to better address the failures at the State level. It has been five years, and Shirley's death is still not adequately investigated. We hope this lawsuit leads to positive change in the standards to which we hold investigators. Jason and his family continue to suffer from his mother's murder and the failed investigation by the State."

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