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# Conspiracy, Lies Reported by the *New Yorker* Magazine in Execution of Stanley Tookie Williams

## High-Level California State Officials Collaborated in Secret Media Campaign

Richmond, California — The *New Yorker* magazine, July 30<sup>th</sup> issue, features an article, "Dean of Death Row," about former San Quentin State Prison spokesperson Vernell Crittendon and his abuse of institutional power:

- The *New Yorker* shows that Crittendon misrepresented statements to the media about children's book author, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and condemned prisoner Stanley Tookie Williams in the months and days leading up to Williams's controversial execution on December 13, 2005.
- The article also reports that Crittendon's untrue allegations about Williams were made with full approval of authorities at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the California State Attorney General's Office. The article implies that the Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger knew about the intended media campaign to turn the public against clemency for Williams. These institutions have a legal responsibility to verify as accurate all information released to the public and the media.
- The article further asserts that Crittendon and these institutions of law enforcement conspired with each other as early as 2004 to implement attacks against Williams with false information to build widespread public support for killing the anti-gang author.

The article, by long-time *New Yorker* features writer Tad Friend, disproves the following allegations that were made by Crittendon against Williams and were widely reported in the media prior to his being killed:

1. Williams was orchestrating unspecified "gangland crimes" in the very recent past and was not the redeemed man that his work -- to deflect young men from the gang life he had led -- indicated. "... he [Crittendon] also eventually acknowledged that Williams hadn't actually been orchestrating gangland crimes."
2. Williams did not counsel his youngest son, Stanley Tookie Williams IV, by writing letters to him. **But when pressed by Mr. Friend, the *New Yorker* writer, Crittendon admitted, "... I can't say for sure he (Williams) wasn't writing his son."** Williams, in fact, did regularly write and send pictures to Young Stan.
3. Williams had a "suspiciously large" prison bank account. In an Associated Press article (November 17, 2005) Crittendon used that accusation as one of several examples to support, according to Crittendon, that Williams was "a con." Crittendon stated: "A con always will say one thing to you while the whole time he has another agenda . . . I'm concerned that possibly this marketing [of Williams] that's going on . . . leads the public to hear the words but not to see that sleight of hand." Ironically, these are statements we now know describe Crittendon himself and his behavior, not Williams. **Only \$1,682 was in Williams account, based on prison records.**

Barbara Becnel, executor of Williams's estate, responds to these revelations: "Now we know that the State Attorney General's Office and the CDCR approved Crittendon's public lies about Stan's remarkable rehabilitation. Now we know that San Quentin Prison, the CDCR and the State Attorney General's Office conspired to develop a media campaign intended to destroy Stan's credibility, undermine his fight for clemency, and pave the way to make his execution more 'acceptable' to the public. These are the same institutions that maintained throughout that Stan was guilty despite evidence to the contrary. What else have the representatives of these institutions hidden from the public? What else have they lied about? Was the Governor complicit as well?" ###