

Reward offered for tips exonerating Burton man convicted in 1986 slaying

Comment

Posted on July 12, 2017 at 3:56 PM

By [Dominic Adams](#)

BURTON, MI - A \$50,000 reward has been offered for anyone who provides information that will lead to the exoneration of a former Burton man sentenced to life in prison for a St. Clair County murder that took place more than 30 years ago.

Temujin Kensu is offering up to \$25,000 and his attorneys will match that amount for credible information about the Nov. 5, 1986, slaying of Scott Macklem in a parking lot at St. Clair Community College in Port Huron.

A Burton native, Kensu was formerly known as Frederick Freeman. He has maintained his innocence and has been fighting to get his conviction and life sentence overturned.

David Sanders of the Proving Innocence project at the University of Michigan says Kensu is using money he won in a lawsuit against the Michigan Department of Corrections to fund the reward.

Any credible information regarding Macklem's death could get a tipster \$5,000, while \$25,000 is offered for details that either exonerates Kensu or leads to the arrest or conviction of the responsible party.

His attorneys at 1-800-Law-Firm will match any reward that leads to Kensu's exoneration.

Temujin Kensu is serving a life sentence for the 1987 murder of Scott Macklem in Port Huron. He has maintained he's innocent.

The reward offers come on the heels of the documentary-style show Investigation Discovery aired called "Reasonable Doubt" last month.

"We're pleased with the attention it's been beginning to get," Sanders said.

"Ultimately, it may take the recognition by the public and its elected officials that this is a problem that has to be addressed not through the legal process, but the clemency process.

"I always say it's the most egregious case of wrongful conviction in the state of Michigan and possibly the country that I've ever seen. There's absolutely no evidence of any kind that suggests he was involved in the murder."

Sanders and the Proving Innocence project's goal is to free innocent men and women wrongfully convicted and sent to prison for crimes they did not commit.

Anyone with information that could exonerate Kensu is asked to call 1-800-595-0830.

Kensu insists he was hundreds of miles away in the Upper Peninsula when Macklem was killed.

Prosecutors say Kensu killed Macklem because he was jealous of Macklem dating an ex-girlfriend. The state and St. Clair County prosecutors say he was guilty.

A witness said at the trial that he saw Kensu drive away from the crime scene. It was later found out that the witness was hypnotized and gave a wrong license plate.

"This is a case where there's nothing -- no evidence, witnesses, anything," Kensu said in a 2010 interview with The Flint Journal. "Every single person that has come to look at the case has come to the exact, same conclusion that I did not commit this crime."

He grew up in Burton, but lived with his grandparents who lived on Milbourne Avenue in Flint and attended Southwestern and Northern high schools.

An appeals court judge in 2010 overturned the first-degree murder conviction, citing an ineffective lawyer and a prosecutor's misconduct. But the U.S. Sixth District Court of Appeals later upheld the conviction.

"Matching the reward was the right thing for us to do," said Ari Kresch, founder of 1-800-Law-Firm. "It's just heartbreaking to know that Mr. Kensu has spent three decades in prison when it's abundantly clear he is wholly innocent. It's a travesty of justice."

MLive-The Flint Journal could not reach St. Clair County Prosecutor Michael D. Wendling for comment on Wednesday, July 12.

"There's absolutely no evidence that he committed the crime so they don't want to talk," Sanders said of investigators and prosecutors in St. Clair County. "I think there's some ugly politics going on."