

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wrongfully Convicted Man Petitions for Clemency

Byron Case, a Kansas City, Missouri, man sentenced to life without parole for the 1997 murder of an Independence woman, now wants your help getting out of prison.

Case filed an application for executive clemency today, asking Missouri Governor Jay Nixon for a pardon, and is collecting signatures from the community in support of his release. In Case's application, he presents evidence the jury at his five-day trial was barred from hearing, as well as new forensic science discoveries about time-of-death indicators he says clear him of involvement in the October 22, 1997, shooting death of Anastasia WitbolsFeugen.

Almost two hundred people have already put their name to the petition by following a link from FreeByronCase.com, a Web site maintained by Case's friends and family.

Three years after the murder, Case's former girlfriend, Kelly Moffett, came forward to claim she saw Case, who was then 18, deliberately shoot and kill their friend, 18-year-old WitbolsFeugen, in Lincoln Cemetery, in the Blue Summit area between Kansas City and Independence. Prior to obtaining Moffett's testimony, authorities theorized WitbolsFeugen died at the hands of her boyfriend, Justin Bruton, who committed suicide the day after the murder. Case was arrested in June of 2001 and, with Moffett as the State's sole material witness, he was found guilty in May of 2002. He has since exhausted all of his procedural appeals.

From the beginning, the case garnered widespread attention. The Missouri Senate passed a resolution in November of 1997, honoring WitbolsFeugen's short life. Area newspapers made much of the apparent "gothic" lifestyle of WitbolsFeugen, Bruton, and their friends Moffett and Case, citing their penchant for black clothing and bizarre music and films.

Robert WitbolsFeugen soon made headlines for filing a complaint against Sergeant Gary Kilgore of the Jackson County Sheriff's Department, the man leading the investigation into his daughter's death.

Media coverage increased after Case's 2002 arrest, when the weekly newspaper The Pitch printed an eight-page cover story, "Cemetery Plot," about WitbolsFeugen's murder. The Pitch also published a much shorter piece in 2007, "This Murderer Needs a Friend," when it learned that Case had a profile on the social networking site MySpace.

In 2009, in his online true-crime column, In Cold Blog, writer Burl Barer hesitantly questioned Case's guilt. Then, last year, California author J. Bennett Allen roundly criticized the jury's verdict in his book The Skeptical Juror and the Trial of Byron Case.

During his ten-year incarceration, Case himself has begun writing. FreeByronCase.com links to a blog called The Pariah's Syntax, which showcases some of Case's essays. It also lists several publications where his writing has appeared and indicates he has written a memoir detailing his experiences as a lifelong outsider.