

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT**

Darnell Brooks,
Petitioner,
v.
State of Massachusetts,
Respondent.

AFFIDAVIT OF ALEXANDER SIMPSON

In Support of Post-Conviction Relief

I, **Alexander Simpson**, being duly sworn, hereby declare under oath and penalty of perjury the following:

1. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I have served as a public defender for over eight years and have represented numerous clients in serious felony cases, including juveniles charged as adults.
2. I was appointed by the court to represent **Darnell Brooks**, a 16-year-old defendant, in a murder trial in which he was accused of fatally shooting another youth in broad daylight in South Boston.
3. Prior to trial, Mr. Brooks voluntarily surrendered to law enforcement with his mother and confessed to the shooting. The prosecution presented additional evidence, including a Detroit Tigers baseball cap found at the crime scene, which tested positive for Mr. Brooks' DNA.
4. In preparing and executing my defense, I did everything within my professional capabilities to advocate on behalf of Mr. Brooks. I reviewed all discovery materials, consulted with my client, cross-examined witnesses, and sought to humanize Mr. Brooks before the court, emphasizing his youth, background, and environmental pressures, including potential exposure to gang activity.
5. During jury selection, the courtroom was closed to the public due to overcrowding. I did not object to this closure. At the time, I was unaware that such an act constituted a *structural error* under the Sixth Amendment, and that failure to maintain an open courtroom during voir dire could infringe upon my client's right to a public trial.
6. My decision not to object was not strategic; it was based on a lack of awareness of the legal implications. I did not knowingly waive my client's constitutional right, nor did I receive guidance on the matter at the time.
7. I have dedicated my legal career to ensuring fairness and equal justice for all clients, regardless of their background or the charges they face. I regret this oversight and acknowledge the seriousness of any constitutional violation that may have occurred.

8. If the Court finds that my failure to object to the courtroom closure deprived Mr. Brooks of his constitutional rights, I accept full responsibility for that error and support any relief the Court deems just and necessary under the law.

I swear under the penalties of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed:

Alexander Simpson

Alexander Simpson

Court-Appointed Counsel for Darnell Brooks

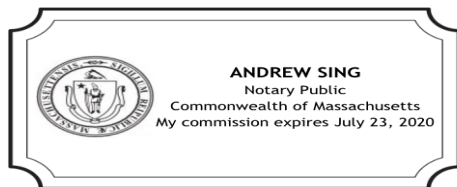
Date: September 15, 2016

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this 15 day of September, **2016**.

Notary Public: Andrew Sing

My Commission Expires: July 23, 2020



Andrew Sing