



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

AFFIDAVIT OF REVEREND JAMES CARTER

I, Reverend James Carter, hereby declare under oath the following:

1. I am over 18 years of age and competent to testify to the matters set forth in this affidavit. I make this declaration based on my personal knowledge and observations.
2. I am the Senior Pastor of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, located at 1480 Dorchester Avenue, South Boston, Massachusetts, 02124, a predominantly Black church that has served the South Boston community for over 40 years. I have been the spiritual leader of this congregation for the past 15 years.
3. I have known Darnell Brooks and his mother, Ms. Loraine Brooks, for many years. While Darnell did not actively participate in our youth ministry, I knew him as a young man who struggled with his environment and circumstances. Like many boys growing up in our neighborhood, Darnell was exposed to violence, poverty, and negative influences. Despite these challenges, I always saw potential in him and made efforts to keep my door open to him and his mother. Our church believes in redemption, community, and support, especially for our youth who face the harshest conditions. Darnell was not a lost cause - he was a child in need of guidance, support and understanding.
4. In 2003, when Darnell was just 16 years old and on trial for murder, I was deeply disturbed to learn that the courtroom was closed to the public during jury selection and that neither I nor his mother were permitted to attend this critical stage of the proceedings.
5. Although Darnell had previous contact with the legal system for some juvenile offenses, this was his first time facing such a serious charge with life-altering consequences. Despite his earlier encounters with the law, he was still just a scared 16-year-old boy who had never experienced the full weight of the criminal justice system as an "adult". The gravity of this trial - combined with his age, his background, and the intimidating courtroom environment - left him especially vulnerable. Without the support of his mother or myself during jury selection, Darnell had no trusted adult presence to provide reassurance or ensure that his rights were being fully protected during this critical phase of the trial.
6. Had Ms. Brooks or I been allowed inside, we could have provided not only moral support, but also helped flag any concerns during jury selection. In particular, we would know if any jurors

seemed biased or unfit to fairly judge a Black teenage boy from our community. Our presence would have offered Darnell strength and possibly led the defense to be more attentive to the details of the process.

7. It is my understanding that Darnell's attorney did not object to the closure of the courtroom. In my view, this showed a lack of assistance of counsel. Any competent defense attorney should have recognized the serious constitutional issue at stake and fought to preserve Darnell's 6th Amendment right to a public trial, especially for a Black minor facing a murder charge.
8. The lack of objection and failure to ensure the presence of family and community during jury selection not only isolated Darnell but also undermined the fairness and transparency of the judicial process.

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

Executed this 30th Day of January, 2017, in South Boston, Massachusetts.

Reverend James Carter

Reverend James Carter
Pastor, New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
1480 Dorchester Avenue
South Boston, MA 02124
rev.jcarter@newhopesb.org

NOTARY PUBLIC

On this 30th day of January, 2017, before me, the undersigned notary public, personally appeared Reverend James Carter, who proved to me through satisfactory evidence of identification to be the person who name is signed above, and who swore or affirmed to me that the contents of this affidavit are true and accurate.

____Angie Sutton_____



Client Note: Here is a letter from my pastor saying how important it was for me to have support in the courtroom at all times.