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A diagram showing a central blue oval layer sandwiched between two white oval layers, all set against a black background. This represents a three-layered structure.

I ain't saying I'm innocent. I'm saying the way my trial was handled wasn't right. What really hurt me the most was that during jury selection — like, the part where they pick the people who decide if I'm guilty or not — the judge said my mom and other folks who came to support me couldn't be in the courtroom. They told them they had to leave. My mom had been with me since day one, and I needed her there. I don't know the laws like that, but I thought trials were supposed to be open so things stay fair. I couldn't believe my lawyer didn't say nothing. He just let it happen. I didn't even know I had the right to speak up about it. Ain't nobody explained that to me.

I don't have fancy words or a fancy education. I didn't like school and I wasn't good at it. But I know what it feels like to be doing life in prison for something I don't think was handled right from the jump. If the courtroom had stayed open like it was supposed to, maybe the jury would've seen I had people who cared. Maybe the outcome would've been the same, maybe not. Maybe things would've felt more fair. My lawyer was supposed to protect me, but he didn't. That's why I'm asking the Supreme Court to take a look. I didn't get a real chance, and I don't think that's what this country stands for.

That's why I'm asking you to hear my case. I just want a fair chance — the chance I didn't get back then.

Respectfully,

Darnell Brooks

Previous Attorney Information

Alexander Simpson passed the Massachusetts State Bar Exam and joined the state public defender's office in August 1995. Because of his passion for social justice and fair representation, Mr. Simpson chose to follow a career at the public defender's office rather than work in private practice where he could have made more money. The public defender's office typically assigns 1st degree murder cases to attorney's with more experience, and Mr. Simpson fit this category. At the time of Mr. Brooks's case, Mr. Simpson had approximately 76 active cases he was working on his caseload. Due to limited funding of the public defense system, Mr. Simpson and other public defenders often have insufficient time to meet with their clients and prepare a case. Because of the highly visible nature of this case, the courtroom had maxed out its viewing capacity and the judge closed it during jury selection. Mr. Simpson did not object to the closing of the courtroom during jury selection. Because of this action, Mr. Brooks has asked for a new trial due to this action. Mr. Simpson is a strong believer in equal justice, but does not feel that Mr. Brooks case was unfair due to this action by the judge. Therefore, he proceeded with the case as he had prepared it and defended Mr. Brooks to the best of his ability.

- **Attorney Name:** Alexander Simpson
- **Contact Information:** Public Defenders Office, State of Massachusetts
- **Dates of Representation:** August 2003 - September 2003
- **Reason for Termination:** Completed case

Summary

I understand that I committed a crime and I need to be punished. But, I don't think it was fair to get a jury behind closed doors. My family was not in the courtroom and could not be there to support me. My lawyer didn't think there was anything wrong. I do. Please give me another chance.