|  |
| --- |
| **Vendetta Son of prominent anti police brutality activist convicted in police frame-up**  |

Bukowski, Diane
Michigan Citizen
10-14-2000

***William “Robocop” Melendez and David LeValley framed Squires’ son***

***Family will ask Worthy to overturn jury verdict***

Death, beatings, and now prison face the Squires family. The ongoing conflict between members of the family and some Detroit police officers has touched three generations.

As police beat Cornell Squires two years ago, his father - who witnessed the beating - suffered a heart attack which proved to be fatal. Now he may lose his only child to the prison system as a result of the subsequent police frame-up.

Cornell Emmanuel Squires, 19, was convicted September 26 of assault with intent to rob while being armed. The jury Squires faced had only two Black members. He was acquitted on charges of attempted carjacking of two undercover police officers. The trial took place before Wayne County Circuit Court Judge **Kym** **Worthy**.

Squires faces sentencing October 30, with guidelines that call for minimums ranging from 27 months to six years in prison. The maximum sentence is life. Emmanuel, as he is known, has no prior police record.

"We plan to ask Judge **Worthy** to overturn the verdict, and are asking the community to support us by writing and calling her," said Cornell Squires, the defendant's father. "We do not believe that any jury in the old Recorders' Court, composed of Detroiters, would have believed the police and brought this verdict."

He says his son was planning to start chef's school in Pittsburgh this month. But the jury's verdict has changed all that.

Squires was arrested by Fourth Precinct undercover officers William Melendez and **David LeValley** last fall. The officers worked on the precinct's narcotics team with officer Robert Feld, who beat Squires' father the previous year, calling him a "nigger" and threatening to kill him.

The jury never heard testimony regarding the history of Fourth Precinct police harassment of the Squires family. Testimony of a witness in the car with Squires at the time of his arrest was also barred, after **prosecutor** Thomas Trzcinski threatened to have the witness arrested if he testified.

"How is the earlier information regarding officer Robert Feld relevant?" Judge **Worthy** asked at the outset of the trial.

**Worthy** referred to an article in **The Michigan Citizen** detailing frame-ups carried out against the Squires family after the 1998 incident. She said testimony regarding those incidents should have been brought in pre-trial evidentiary hearings.

Melendez and LeValley testified that Squires approached them holding an unknown object they thought was a weapon. They said Squires told them, "Get out of the f-ing car."

The officers testified that they identified themselves as policemen, and the car Squires was riding in took off at a high rate of speed. Squires was arrested, and officers found no weapon.

According to defense attorneys, no evidence of assault was ever put forth by the prosecution.

"No weapon was ever presented in evidence, and the officers testified that Squires never took any further action after the alleged statement," said defense attorney Shaun Neal.

Testimony from the two officers was conflicting. Melendez claimed Squires got within "six inches" of his partner. LeValley, on the other hand, testified that Squires was "two feet" from the front of the officers' car -or about ten feet away.

Neal moved for a directed verdict of "not guilty" after the officers testified, but **Worthy** denied the request.

Witness Stanley Wilson, an 18-year-old friend of Squires who was subpoenaed by the prosecution, completely contradicted the officers' testimony. Wilson said on the night of the incident, he and another friend dropped Squires off near his home. He said their car drove away at a normal speed and sat parked within view of the ensuing arrest.

Although police had the names of both Wilson and the driver, Quintin Baxter, from the beginning, no charges were brought against the two.

Emmanuel Squires calmly testified on his own behalf, only breaking down when the **prosecutor** asked about his family. He started to cry, saying, "I miss my grandfather."

Squires testified that officer Melendez got out of his car, never drawing his gun or shouting "Police," and chased him.

Squires also testified that he saw the police investigator who took his statement ball it up and throw it away.

Squires said he signed another statement after being promised he would be promptly released.

During closing arguments, supporters from the Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality who came to court on behalf of Emmanuel were barred from the courtroom.

Several of those already present were loudly reprimanded by **Worthy** for whispering, and one supporter was ejected by a court sheriff who claimed he was sleeping.

Article copyright Michigan Citizen.