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The Putnam Pit

[No bull]

Watchdog of the Upper Cumberland

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Vernell Dixon murder

Witness swears government knew Mullins was innocent in Dixon Case

Ex-carney’s affidavit rebuffs state on 1999 Dixon murder

By [GEOFF DAVIDIAN](#)

Putnam Pit editor

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. (May 5, 2022) – Former Cookeville resident Terry Dawson, a 59-year-old ex-convict, grandmother, student of criminal justice and one-time jail-house minister, swears in an affidavit that investigators told her they knew Phillip Mullins did not kill Vernell Dixon. Mr. Mullins has been in prison for the murder since 2001, and is ineligible for parole.

Ms. Dixon’s third affidavit in the past five months refutes several key elements of the state’s courtroom arguments that Mr. Mullins killed 87-year-old Mrs. Dixon in her West End Street home on Aug. 18, 1999.

Former 13th Judicial District Attorney William E. Gibson, who prosecuted Mr. Mullins in 2001 for the strangulation death of Mrs. Dixon, told the court then that the “State’s case would be that [Mr. Mullins] clearly was at the scene on the night of the murder and no other time”

([Trial transcript, p. 33, lines 20-22.](#))

Mr. Gibson added: “The scientific evidence places him in the house Mr. Gibson told the court that the state’s evidence “does scientifically place the defendant in that crime scene. . . .” ([Ibid, lines 6-7](#)).

absolutely.” ([Ibid, lines 12-13](#)). Mr. Gibson accused Mr. Mullins of killing he victim to get money to buy crack cocaine, and that he stole cash and a ring from the ramshackle residence.

In her affidavit, dated April 13, 2022, Ms. Dawson swears that she gave Mr. Mullins the \$20

prosecutors say he stole, and that the ring prosecutors claim Mr. Mullins stole was given to him by Barry Dowell, a suspect who police interviewed about the killing.

Ms. Dawson said that neither police nor prosecutors had contacted her about her testimony, but Mr. Mullins’ public defender had discussed her possible court appearance late this month..

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