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May 13, 2015

Board of Directors,
Innocence Project of Texas
c/o Gary Udashen, President
Sorrels, Udashen and Anton
2311 Cedar Springs Road, Suite 250
Dallas, Texas 75201

"No legacy is so rich as honesty".
-Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*

Dear Friends,

Please accept my resignation as Chief Counsel of the Innocence Project of Texas.

This is one of the hardest decisions I have ever made, and I want to explain why I did it.

When we founded this project 10 years ago we were part of a movement. That movement was a loose coalition of groups devoted to freeing the innocent and changing the criminal justice system from state to state.

We did our part. We got people exonerated. We got good legislation passed. We made history with the Tim Cole case. We stayed small, democratic, and focused on reforming the Texas system. We created some great relationships with law enforcement officials and forensic scientists. We built a resilient, authentic, and independent outfit.

While we were doing that, the New York-based Innocence Project went from being a small nonprofit to an organization with a multi-million dollar budget. As its size grew, so did its appetite for money and its need to control the reform movement. What was once a movement has now become a business.

The Innocence Project now thrives on large contributions from the ultra-rich. It is full of Wall Street types and celebrities- this year the organization is even honoring a potentate from Goldman Sachs at an exclusive gathering in New York.

I said over a year ago that the interests of our Texas group and the people in New York would diverge more and more as time passed. I strongly urged us to dissociate from them by declaring our independence, changing our name, and returning to our roots as an independent group.

You all disagreed. I did not fault you for it, my friends – ours was an honest difference of opinion.



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Now, however, that disagreement has become too much for me to bear. I believe that staying connected with the New York people will compromise the work of criminal justice reform in this state. I want to keep handling cases, working for change, and improving forensic science in this state. I just don't feel like I can do that effectively if I am identified with the name "Innocence Project" and the people in New York. They can keep their \$100,000.00 "VIP" tables at galas, their friends from Goldman Sachs, and their need for control. It is not for me.

Of course, I respect your decision to stay with that group even though I disagree with it. I hope you respect mine to move on.

There is a lot for each of us to do in this state. There is plenty of room for all of us. I am certain we will stay friends and colleagues in this movement, and I wish nothing but the best for the organization I founded and for each of you.

Sincerely,

Jeff Blackburn