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THE STATE OF OHIO,)
) SS: JOHN J. RUSSO, J.
COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA.)
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
(CRIMINAL BRANCH)
THE STATE OF OHIO,)

)
Plaintiff,)

)
vs.) Case No. CR-88-232189-A

)
THOMAS M. KEENAN,)

)
Defendant.)

EXCERPT OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Whereupon, the following proceedings
were had in Courtroom No. 17-A, The Justice
Center, Cleveland, Ohio, before the
Honorable John J. Russo, on Thursday,
September 6, 2012, upon the indictment filed
heretofore.

APPEARANCES:

William D. Mason, Prosecuting Attorney, by:
Rick Bell, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney,
Aaron Brockler, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney,
Katherine E. Mullin, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney,
On behalf of the State of Ohio.

John Gibbons, Esq.,
John Hildebrand, Esq.,

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On behalf of the Defendant.

Diane L. Cieply, RMR
Official Court Reporter
Cuyahoga County, Ohio

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2 THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

3 SEPTEMBER 6, 2012

4 THE COURT: That being said, then I have

5 an opinion with respect to the Motion to Dismiss,

6 and so I'm going to read that opinion here this

7 morning.

8 So for all of you who are present in

9 Court, it's important for this Court to note that

10 I must completely refuse to be swayed or

11 influenced by considerations such as sympathy for

12 or bias or prejudice against either the State of
13 Ohio or Mr. Keenan in this case.
14 In making this decision this morning, the
15 Court has considered the prior rulings by the Ohio
16 Supreme Court and of the Northern District Court
17 of Ohio, all discovery motions that have been
18 filed by the parties in this case, Mr. Keenan's
19 Motion to Dismiss, the State's Brief in
20 Opposition, and all the oral arguments that I
21 heard on August 23rd of 2012.

22 And after reviewing all the relevant
23 motions and case law, the Court finds that the
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24 Eighth District Court of Appeals case,
25 State v. Larkins, to be the instructive,
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1 compelling, and controlling case before this
2 Court.

3 In Larkins, the State of Ohio appealed the
4 Trial Court's dismissal of a 1986 felony murder
5 indictment against the Defendant at that time,
6 Ronald Larkins. The Eighth District Court of
7 Appeals upheld the dismissal with prejudice of the
8 case based on the State's discovery violations and
9 found it to be the extraordinary case where the
10 prejudice could not be cured by a new trial.

11 As part of that analysis in Larkins, the
12 Eighth District Court of Appeals refers to the
13 tests that were used by the Ohio Supreme Court in
14 the case of State v. Wiles. In Wiles, the Ohio
15 Supreme Court held that a Trial Court has
16 discretion under Criminal Rule 16(E)(3), which is
17 presently now in 2012 Criminal Rule 16(L)(1), to
18 determine the appropriate response for failure of
19 a party to disclose material subject to a valid
20 discovery request. To determine whether a Trial
21 Court has abused its discretion in dealing with
22 Criminal Rule 16 violations, the Appeals Court
23 looks to the following three-prong test:

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24 The first prong is the violation and was
25 the violation willful; the second prong is

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1 foreknowledge, would foreknowledge have benefited
2 Mr. Keenan or the Defendant; and the third prong
3 is has the Defendant suffered prejudice as a
4 result of the State's failure to disclose the
5 information.

6 Applying that test to this case, I'm going

7 to make the following specific findings of fact as
8 they pertain to this case:

9 As to the first prong, it is without
10 question, based on the egregious history of the
11 prosecutorial misconduct and the Brady violations
12 outlined in detail by both the Ohio Supreme Court
13 and the Northern District Court of Ohio in this
14 case that the State willfully withheld exculpatory
15 evidence from Keenan and his attorneys.
16 Looking at the second prong, the knowledge
17 of this material prior to trial would have clearly
18 benefited Mr. Keenan's case.
19 It would have allowed for more effective
20 Cross-Examination of witnesses, especially
21 Edward Espinoza, the Co-Defendant, and the alleged
22 sole eyewitness to this crime.

23 The evidence that Paul Lewis had been

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24 indicted for the rape of Christopher Longenecker,
25 that Anthony Klann, the decedent, had some

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1 knowledge of this rape, and that Paul Lewis had
2 never been prosecuted for it would have also been
3 beneficial for Keenan. This evidence could have
4 strengthened Keenan's case by establishing a
5 motive of someone other than Keenan for the murder
6 of Anthony Klann.

7 For the same reasons, the evidence that
8 Paul Lewis was the anonymous caller who called
9 police and identified Anthony Klann as the murder
10 victim, and had information regarding the murder
11 that was not publicly known could also have
12 benefited Mr. Keenan's case.

13 The evidence that the initial responding
14 detectives believed the murder to have occurred
15 somewhere other than Doan's Creek would have
16 allowed a more effective questioning of the police
17 investigation, impeachment of Espinoza, and could
18 have cast doubt on the State's theory of the case.

19 The cassette tape that was made by
20 Angelo Crimi that may have implicated others in
21 the murder would have been obviously beneficial to
22 the Keenan case. The disclosure of the existence
23 of this tape and its subsequent disappearance

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24 could have held significant impeachment value
25 towards the impeachment of the police and

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1 Edward Espinoza.

2 James "Lightfoot" Russell's relocation
3 request could have been used by Keenan's defense
4 counsel to question the State of Ohio regarding
5 his unavailable status in the second trial.
6 The statements made by the neighbors,
7 Theresa Farinacci, and the older couple who was
8 not identified, would have strengthened the
9 initial detective's conclusion that the murder
10 occurred somewhere else or somewhere other than
11 Doan's Creek.
12 It could have also been used to question
13 the thoroughness of the police investigation, and
14 Paul Lewis' involvement in the crime since the
15 statements were overheard by neighbors near
16 Mr. Lewis' apartment.
17 It is clear to this Court that the
18 exculpatory evidence would have strengthened and
19 been beneficial to Keenan's case as outlined in
20 prong two.
21 Looking at the third and final prong, has
22 Keenan suffered severe prejudice as a result of
23 the State's failure to disclose the exculpatory
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24 evidence.

25 Keenan's case is now 24 years removed from
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1 the crime. The witnesses would have to testify to
2 detailed issues that took place that long ago,
3 including the date and time of this alleged murder
4 which have never been decisively established.
5 The only alleged eyewitness,
6 Edward Espinoza, is deceased. And his testimony
7 is not admissible because he was never able to be
8 cross-examined with the newly-discovered
9 exculpatory material. Additionally, Keenan was
10 never able to use the exculpatory evidence to
11 impeach Espinoza.
12 Other witnesses of importance are also
13 deceased including Detective Timothy Horval,
14 Lee Oliver, Angelo Crimi, and James Russell. None
15 of whom have been able to be cross-examined or
16 confronted with the exculpatory evidence.
17 The Keenan case before the Court today
18 clearly satisfies the three-prong test as outlined
19 by the Ohio Supreme Court case of State v. Wiles.
20 As in Larkins, this case is the unique and
21 extraordinary case, that the harm done to
22 Mr. Keenan cannot be resolved by a new trial, and
23 this Court is going to dismiss this case with
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24 prejudice.

25 The Court finds that Thomas Michael

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1 Keenan's Motion to Dismiss the Indictment Against
2 Him with Prejudice must be granted in the interest
3 of justice and fairness. In light of the State's
4 egregious prosecutorial misconduct and the Brady
5 violations in Keenan's prior two trials, Keenan
6 cannot receive the fair and Constitutional trial
7 that he is entitled to today.

8 Further, it is the State's position that
9 the Brady violations have already been sanctioned
10 and the relief has already been ordered by the
11 Northern District Court of Ohio, and the sanction
12 was for a new trial or for a dismissal by the
13 State. I believe the State is mistaken in this
14 assertion.

15 Neither the Eighth District Court of
16 Appeals in Larkins, nor the Northern District
17 Court of Ohio in this case characterized their
18 order for a new trial as a sanction against the
19 State of Ohio.

20 The Larkins Court goes on to explain that
21 Criminal Rule 33(D) and Ohio Revised Code Section
22 2945.82 govern the matter in which a new trial is
23 to be conducted. Criminal Rule 33(D) states that
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24 when "a new trial is awarded on appeal, the
25 accused shall stand trial upon the charge or
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1 charges of which he was convicted." Ohio Revised
2 Code Section 2945.83 states, "when a new trial is
3 awarded on appeal, the accused shall stand for
4 trial upon the indictment or information as though
5 there had been no previous trial thereof."

6 Larkins concluded that "once a new trial
7 is ordered, matters stood in the same position
8 they did before any trial had been conducted. It
9 follows then that this Trial Court possesses all
10 authority to reopen discovery or entertain any
11 pretrial motions available at law," such as the
12 motion before the Court today.

13 Therefore, while the Court is aware that
14 it has an obligation to impose the least severe
15 sanction that is consistent with the purposes of
16 the rules of discovery, I find that Keenan's case
17 is the unique and extraordinary case where the
18 prejudice created cannot be cured by a new trial.
19 I do want to state, the Court wants to

20 make a clear statement that the decision here
21 today is not a reflection on the current team of
22 Assistant County Prosecutors that have been
23 assigned to this case. They have conducted
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24 themselves in a professional and forthcoming
25 manner.

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1 Nor is this a reflection of the Court's
2 opinion on Keenan's guilt or innocence. Instead,
3 it is a decision that is founded in the basic
4 right that our forefathers envisioned for those
5 accused of a crime to be afforded a fair trial
6 free from prejudice and misconduct.
7 Pursuant to the mandate of Larkins,
8 Criminal Rule (16)(L)(1), and Criminal Rule 48(B),
9 this Court is left with no other option but to
10 grant Defendant Thomas Michael Keenan's Motion to
11 Dismiss the Indictment Against Him with Prejudice.
12 * * * *

1 C E R T I F I C A T E
2

3 I, Diane L. Cieply, Official Court
4 Reporter for the Court of Common Pleas, Cuyahoga
5 County, Ohio, do hereby certify that I am employed
6 as an Official Court Reporter, and I took down in
7 stenotypy a portion of the proceedings had in said
8 Court of Common Pleas in the above-entitled cause;
9 that I have transcribed a portion of my said
10 stenotype notes into typewritten form, as appears in
11 the foregoing Transcript of Excerpt of Proceedings;
12 that said transcript is a partial record of the
13 proceedings had in the said cause, and constitutes a
14 true and correct Transcript of Excerpt of Proceedings
15 had therein.

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20 Diane L. Cieply, RMR
Official Court Reporter
21 Cuyahoga County, Ohio

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