

FREE PRAKASH CHURAMAN! DROP THE CHARGES!



In 2014, Prakash Churaman was arrested at the age of 15 in connection to a botched attempted robbery that left Taquane Clark dead. NYPD Detectives Daniel Gallagher and Barry Brown interrogated Prakash for nearly four hours without a lawyer present. They lied to him and his mother, saying that if he told them what they wanted to hear, he could go home with his mother, threatening him with life in prison if he did not. Prakash was coerced by the NYPD into making a false confession that put him on the hook for Clark's death.

Prakash was convicted of felony murder in 2018 and spent over six years behind bars after his arrest in 2014. His teenage years were stolen from him. In 2020, **Prakash's murder conviction was thrown out** by the appeals court because at the 2018 trial, Judge Kenneth Holder, a former prosecutor, didn't allow the defense to present expert testimony on juvenile false confessions. The only other evidence against Prakash was "ear-witness" testimony from Clark's grandmother, who claimed she heard Prakash's voice during the robbery. The police and prosecution failed to show any fingerprints, DNA, video, or weapon linking Prakash to the crime.

Despite the lack of evidence and coerced confession, **the Queens DA has decided to retry Prakash for the murder**. They offered Prakash a deal that would have kept him out of prison if he pleaded guilty to assault, but **Prakash refused the deal, insisting that he is innocent**. The Queens DA has recently overturned dozens of convictions due to police providing false evidence and false testimony. News website *Hell Gate* recently revealed that the two detectives who interrogated Prakash covered up exonerating evidence in another murder investigation in which two wrongfully accused men languished in jail for 2.5 years. This cover-up led to a \$2 million settlement by the city. The Queens DA did not turn over this information about police misconduct to the defense in discovery.

Like the Central Park Five, Prakash is just one of many youth, usually poor, immigrant, and Black or Brown, targeted by police and prosecutors for crimes they didn't commit, convicted in sham trials presided over by cruel judges, and locked up in jails and prisons that crush their spirits. As Ryan Budhu wrote in the *NY Daily News* in an Oct. 13, 2021 Op-Ed on Prakash, "According to the National Registry of Exonerations, 22% of people accused of homicide gave false confessions. That figure skyrockets when the accused is a juvenile. Indeed, children are almost four times as likely as adults to confess to crimes they didn't commit."

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Contact Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz at 718-286-6000 extension 0 (during business hours) and qdacommunications@queensda.org and demand: "Drop all charges against Prakash Churaman!" Also call the prosecutor on Prakash's case, Andrea Medina, at 718-286-7018.
2. Prakash's next court date is Monday, June 6 at 1:30pm. Join us to support Prakash outside the Queens County Criminal Court, 125-01 Queens Blvd.
3. Connect with the Free Prakash Alliance: linktr.ee/freeprakashalliance
4. Join **Dare To Struggle** in a summer of organizing to spread the word about Prakash, protest, and support him through his trial.

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What makes Prakash special is that he has decided to fight back. While he was locked up, Prakash started exposing the truth about his case, and supporters rallied to his defense. Since out on home confinement, he has spoken at protest rallies alongside his supporters and to the media. The prosecutor and Judge Holder are now furious at being publicly exposed and want to silence Prakash. At a January 19 court hearing, Judge Holder said that Prakash's home confinement "doesn't allow him to be at rallies" and told Prakash "I haven't put a gag order on you. I am considering it..."

We must stand with Prakash and not let these cops, prosecutors, and Judge Holder get away with framing him. And we must use Prakash's courageous stand to help others stand up, refuse to accept forced "deals" offered by prosecutors, and expose the truth through protest. This summer, join with **Dare To Struggle** in building support for Prakash and publicly exposing the injustice system. And if you or someone you know is going through something similar to Prakash, contact **Dare To Struggle** and let's talk about how we can follow Prakash's example.



Front photo by (Scott Heins/Hell Gate)
Back photo by Naeisha Rose

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