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**Prosecutorial and Judicial Misconduct Cost Him Twenty Years on Death Row;  
Now Released, Clinton Young Pursues Justice**

*Midland County Empowered Former Assistant District Attorney to Work as Both Prosecutor and Pseudo-Judge on His Own Cases for 20 Years*

**Pittsburgh, PA**—Clinton Young spent nearly twenty years on death row for a crime he did not commit. Today, he asks the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas to hold those responsible for his wrongful conviction accountable.

For two decades, Midland County, Texas and its prosecutors violated the most fundamental tenets of the Due Process Clause and separation of powers. Between 2001 and 2018, Midland County prosecutor Ralph Petty spent his days as an Assistant District Attorney and his nights as a law clerk for the same judges he practiced before. Empowered by his supervisors and County officials to continue in this dual role, Petty effectively played both prosecutor and judge in more than 300 cases, including in Mr. Young's capital trial and throughout his appellate process.

At the same time that Petty was submitting motions and arguments on behalf of the District Attorney's Office to ensure Mr. Young's execution, he was surreptitiously advising the judge presiding over Mr. Young's criminal proceedings and drafting the judge's orders in the prosecution's favor. As a result, in 2003, Mr. Young was convicted of murdering Doyle Douglas and Samuel Petrey—despite all evidence pointing to someone else as the true murderer—and sentenced to death. Years later, Petty would not only write the State's motion demanding Mr. Young's execution; he also wrote the judge's order granting it. Mr. Young came within eight days of his execution before Midland County's egregious and outrageous abuse of power came to light. And in September of 2021, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals—Texas's highest court for criminal matters—unanimously and unequivocally held that “[t]he evidence presented in the case supports only one legal conclusion: that [Mr. Young] was deprived of his due process rights to a fair trial and an impartial judge.” The Court reversed Mr. Young's conviction.

Although Mr. Young has been released from death row, neither Petty nor the County officials who enabled him have faced accountability for their gross misconduct.

Until now. On September 19, 2023, Mr. Young [filed a lawsuit](#) against Midland County, Petty, and the District Attorneys who enabled and encouraged this misconduct.

“Petty’s dual role in Mr. Young’s case—straddling both sides of the judicial bench—is exactly the form of corruption that our Constitution was designed to protect against. Yet, Midland County officials, District Attorneys, and judges worked together to create a system that ensured prosecutorial victories and shielded Petty from liability,” said Mr. Young’s attorney, Alexa Gervasi, counsel at the Pittsburgh, PA based law firm, [Kraus Jenkins](#). “The egregiousness and obviousness of this misconduct cannot be overstated. Mr. Young came within eight days of execution, at the hands of his own government, because Petty and Midland County abused their power to drop an anvil on the prosecution’s side of the scales of justice.”

From day one, Mr. Young has maintained that he did not murder Mr. Douglas or Mr. Petrey. Despite Mr. Young’s testimony and all of the evidence corroborating his story, Midland County put every resource into sending Mr. Young to death row. As if staffing Petty as both a District Attorney’s Office prosecutor and as the judge’s law clerk on the case weren’t enough of an advantage, the County also offered the obvious suspect a plea deal in exchange for testifying against Mr. Young.

Still, Mr. Young never gave up. From inside his solitary prison cell on Texas’s infamous death row, Mr. Young continued to fight for the truth through applications for habeas relief, all while Petty led the prosecution’s opposition to his habeas applications and continued to work behind the scenes as a law clerk to the judge ruling on—and denying—those same applications. It wasn’t until 2019, after Petty was removed from Mr. Young’s case and Midland County finally disclosed Petty’s misconduct, that Mr. Young’s pleas were heard.

Now, almost two years since the reversal of his conviction, Mr. Young works tirelessly to rebuild the life he lost, earning a living as an oil pump operator, spending time with his family, and making new friends for the first time in twenty years.

But that is not enough for the government. After Mr. Young’s conviction was reversed, the State of Texas re-indicted him for the 2001 murder of Doyle Douglas, even though forensic evidence demonstrates the impossibility of Mr. Young’s culpability. Nearly two years after the reindictment, Mr. Young still has not received even a preliminary hearing, much less an opportunity to demonstrate his innocence. Instead, Mr. Young lives each day with the government’s sword dangling above his head.

“Mr. Young is the epitome of perseverance,” said Merel Pontier, Legal Director and Co-founder of the [Clinton Young Foundation](#). “Remember that he was put on death row at just nineteen years old, and he was not released until he was thirty-eight. Mr. Young was deprived of the growing-up process we experience in our twenties and thirties—the lessons we learn, the relationships we develop, the formation of the adults we want to be. He works every day to make up for the time and experiences that were taken from him.”

Mr. Young deserves justice. Midland County, Ralph Petty, and the District Attorneys deserve accountability.