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Embassy of Pakistan
Interests Section of the Islamic Republic of Iran
2209 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20007

Re: **Hooma Ashkan Panah**

To Whom it May Concern:


Mr. Panah was arrested on November 21, 1993 for the murder of Nicole Parker. On January 23, 1995, he was sentenced to death after a jury convicted him for the crime. The prosecution's presentation of false evidence, the hostile courtroom atmosphere, and his trial lawyer's failure adequately defend Mr. Panah, resulted in a trial rife with constitutional violations.

Mr. Panah's death sentence and first-degree murder conviction were obtained in a corrupted and biased trial atmosphere. For example, a sitting juror attended the same parish as the victim's family; the priest attended the trial. Compounding this bias, the prosecution's case rested on circumstantial evidence that was not as compelling as the jury was led to believe. For example, the jury did not hear that the man who had access to Mr. Panah's apartment, and who was last seen with the victim and never investigated or charged with the murder, had keys to Mr. Panah's apartment and was seen with a suitcase. Multiple searches, including searches with the assistance of K-9 dogs, failed to uncover the victim's body until a warrant was conveniently obtained. The body was found in a suitcase.

To make matters worse, the prosecution also presented false evidence. The prosecution's serologist claimed that stains found in his bedroom showed a mixture of Mr. Panah and the victim's bodily fluids. But an independent expert examined DNA results that the prosecution had—but chose not to present—at trial, and exposed as false the serologist's mixture theory. An independent pathologist also undermined the prosecution's pathologist at trial by concluding that the victim likely died at a time when Mr. Panah could not have been at the scene.

Accordingly, Mr. Panah is seeking to vacate his conviction and death sentence, and his case is currently pending in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sincerely,



Joseph Trigilio
Deputy Federal Public Defender