

Darryl Hunt-like injustice occurring in Smith case, say some

BY LAYLA FARMER
THE CHRONICLE

Ironically, the name Darryl Hunt has become synonymous with justice to many people in the community. Since his release from prison after serving nearly two decades for a murder he did not commit, Hunt has worked tirelessly for others who, like him, have fallen victim to a criminal justice system that is sometimes anything but fair.

The case of Kalvin Michael Smith is of particular interest to Hunt. Smith was sentenced to 29 years in prison in 1995 for the savage and near fatal beating of Jill Marker, who was assaulted at the floral shop, Silk Plant Forest, where she worked. Smith maintains his innocence. And many, Hunt included, believe there is evidence supporting that claim.

"So much of this seems like deja vu for a lot of us," commented the Rev. John Mendez, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church and one of Hunt's most outspoken supporters during his incarceration. "It really grieves my heart because we know how hard we've worked over these last 19 years. We've been hoping that we (as a community) would learn something... How wrong we were!"

The Darryl Hunt Project for Freedom and Justice and Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity co-hosted a rally at Emmanuel Tuesday evening to highlight discrepancies they see in the Smith case.

"We want freedom; we want justice; we want what is right for our families and our brothers and sisters," proclaimed Ministers Conference President Linda Beal to a murmur of agreement from the audience.

The Rev. Steven Angle, pastor of Southside Community Church and one of the Minister's Conference's few Caucasian members, says racism is to blame for the injustices Hunt and others have suffered at the hands of the judicial system.

"One of the things that happens to us is that we allow ourselves to be fragmented," he remarked. "We are divided."

Jet Hollander became involved in the Smith case



The Rev. John Mendez gives remarks.

after sitting on a city review panel on the handling of Hunt's case.

Hollander found extensive information about the details of the Smith case and has pointed out what he says are inconsistencies he noticed in his layman's research. His son, Kevin Hollander, performed a song inspired by Smith, whom he and his father have visited in prison several times.

"I'm not an attorney... I'm not giving you any inside information; everything I'm referring to is available in the public record," Hollander told the group. "All of you can make up your own minds about the facts."

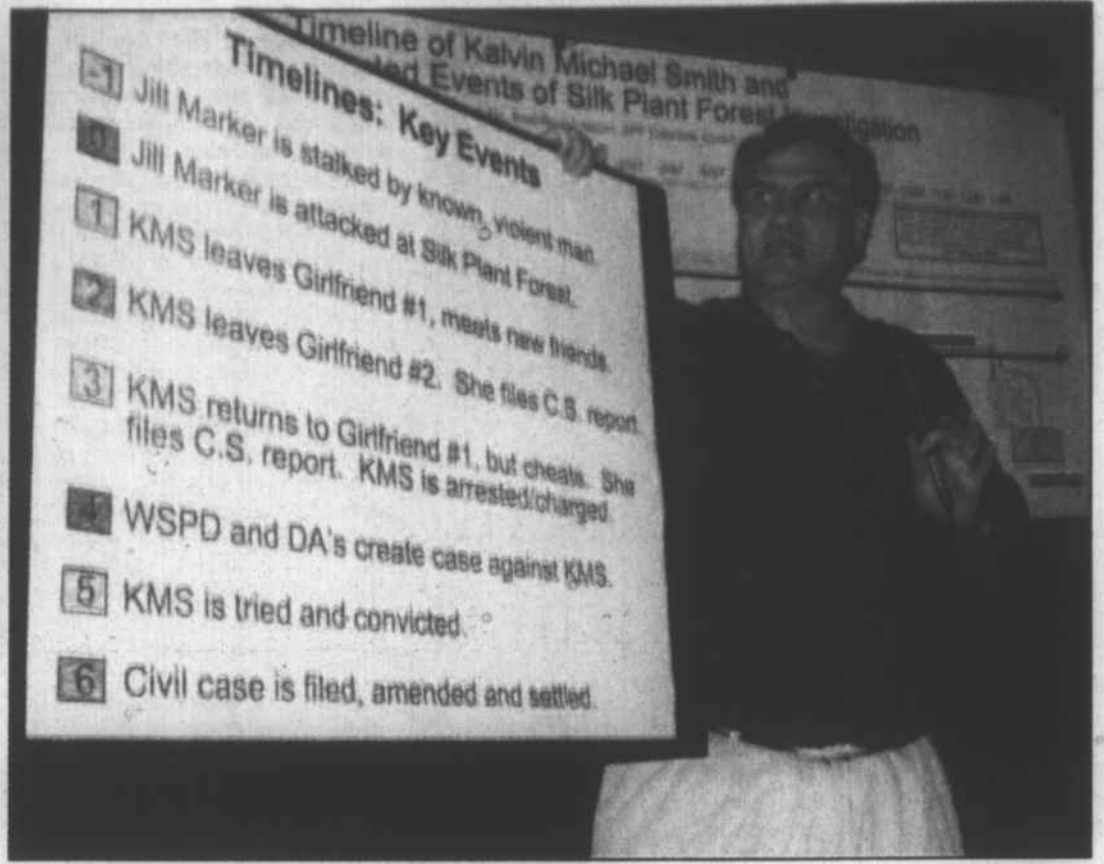
Many others from the community spoke out in support of Smith, including Larry Little, a Winston-Salem State University professor and longtime supporter and friend of Hunt's; Lynn Boyd of Mothers for Justice; and even Smith's own father.

The rally was concluded with an audio tape from Smith himself.

"I can't see you there, but I feel your presence," Smith told the audience in the recording. "I am overwhelmed to know that so many people have come together to see that justice is served... Thank you for your prayers and support. God bless you all."

The DHPFJ encourages community members to show their support for Smith by attending the meeting of the city's Silk Plant Forest Committee, slated for

Monday, Sept. 22, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in Public Meeting Room 530, Stuart Municipal Building, 100 E. First St. For more information, call (336) 727-8000.



Jet Hollander presents facts that he says point to Smith's innocences.

Photos by Layla Farmer

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Kevin Hollander performs a song inspired by the case of Kalvin Michael Smith.

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