

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION**

MARANDA LYNN ODONNELL, et al.,	§	
Plaintiffs,	§	
v.	§	Civil Action No. H-16-1414
	§	
HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, et al.,	§	
Defendants.	§	
	§	
	§	

STATEMENT OF JUDGE MIKE FIELDS

When the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1868, it invalidated the Dred Scott decision. Many, who society deemed good, moral and decent people, vehemently objected to its ratification. They believed former African slaves and their descendants to be less than equal. They were wrong. When the Supreme Court told us in Brown v Board of Education, “separate...is inherently unequal,” and required that children of all races receive an equal education at integrated schools, many citizens who considered themselves to be good, moral and decent cursed at and spat on those children as they attempted to seek equality under the law. They were wrong.

Now, we face what I believe, is the Civil Rights issue of this generation: How will we treat those accused of running afoul of the law? Will the rich have one system of Justice and the poor another? Or will every citizen accused of a crime be provided the equal protection the Fourteenth Amendment demands? Currently, there are good, moral and decent individuals who appear to advocate for a system of Criminal Justice that would treat two similarly situated persons differently based solely on wealth. With all due respect, they too are wrong.

The Fifth Circuit has given us a framework on which we are expected to build a system of Justice which is precisely that...Just. My colleague, Darrell Jordan, the Plaintiffs and I have presented a proposed order that we believe is a practical, workable step towards the goal of providing equal Justice for all, irrespective of their financial condition.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Michael R. Fields
MICHAEL R. FIELDS