

Mother Outraged by Donte Stallworth's Wrist-Slap

By Bob Norman

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This Donte Stallworth sentence is sticking in the Pulp's craw a little. You get drunk, get in a car, accidentally kill someone, and get only 30 days in jail for it?

It doesn't matter that the victim's family -- which is being duly enriched by the NFL's star's largesse -- is good with it. What message is Miami-Dade State Attorney Kathy Fernandez Rundle sending? That if you're rich enough and happen to be an NFL star, you can get smashed and then smash into a human being without serious consequence?

I'm not saying Stallworth should get a huge prison sentence. It was a terrible mistake brought on by a bad decision. But I'd say the *absolute minimum* for a crime like that should be six months in jail, with more time the more egregious the circumstances. Thirty days? It looks like the guy's not even going to miss a football game.

I have to think that one reason there's been so little talk about this sentence is that it's being overshadowed by the cat killer case. (Which brings up the question: How many cats does it take to equal a human life?).



Casey

Anyway, I'm actually going somewhere with this. An email just came across the Pulp's transom from Genevieve Casey, the mother of Sean Casey, a man who was convicted in Miami in 2006 of a crime similar to Stallworth's. Casey, like Stallworth, had no previous criminal record. He was also a highly educated fellow doing important work for a nonprofit organization (maybe even more important than catching footballs). Yet Casey is serving a 12-year prison sentence.

The cases do have vast differences. In the Casey matter, for instance, the driver fled the scene. Casey claims he was completely blacked-out after drinking at a bar and has no memory of the accident or the aftermath. The defense posited a theory that somebody else was driving his car and that Casey was in the back seat (here's a detailed summary definitely worth reading). Guilty or not, it's a fascinating case, and strangely, I can find no media coverage of it. I may be missing something here, but not a single article on Nexis came up on numerous searches.

The two cases really took different paths in the court system, as Casey chose to fight the charges and ultimately fled the country. In the end, Casey accepted a plea to serve 12.5 years in prison rather than go to trial, where the judge allegedly promised a 50-year sentence if he were found guilty. Genevieve Casey largely blames her son's high-profile and rather flamboyant attorney, University of Miami adjunct law professor and judicial candidate Milton Hirsch, for the stiff penalty. You may remember Hirsch from his rather infamous and ultimately ineffective "God's work" defense in the Keith Wasserstrom corruption trial.

If Casey were driving, he deserved a stiffer penalty than Stallworth for his actions after the arrest (his failure to appear in court, by the way, added one year to the sentence). But now he's doing *150 times* the sentence for essentially the same basic crime – driving drunk and accidentally killing someone. Here's the email:

I am outraged at the plea agreement this week between the Miami State Attorney's Office and Cleveland Browns player, Donte Stallworth, charged with DUI manslaughter. He got just 30 days in jail! My son, Sean Casey, was charged for the same traffic offense and prosecutors gave him over 12 years in prison in 2006 even though evidence and experts say he could not have been driving the car. State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle called Stallworth's plea a "just resolution" since Stallworth had no prior record. My son did not either. Sean graduated with honors from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, worked for nearly a decade at a local non-profit organization promoting human rights and free speech, and was planning to join the diplomatic corp at the U.S. Department of State. However, there is a big difference between the two cases. Stallworth's attorney cooperated with prosecutors and paid the victim's family an undisclosed amount of money. Sean's attorney, Milton "Milt" Hirsch, fought with the prosecutors to the point he ultimately told Sean to leave the country to avoid being unfairly prosecuted and sent to prison for a very long time. The State Attorney's Office knows this and has evidence Hirsch told my son to leave, but they are punishing my son for his attorney's mistakes and bad advice. Now prosecutors say Stallworth will get to play football after he does 30 days in jail. What a great contribution to society! Yet, they want to keep my son behind bars for another 10 years at an expense of over half a million dollars to taxpayers instead of letting him give back to society through public service. I seek equal justice for my son now.