

\$2,000 reward offered for new evidence in 1976 murder case

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Call and Post Staff Writer

Timothy Howard, 40, has been in prison since 1977 for the murder of Columbus Police Officer Bernie Davis. Davis was shot and killed during an armed robbery on Dec. 21, 1976, at the Ohio National Bank, 1433 E. Main St. (The bank is now called National City Bank).

Howard, currently incarcerated at the London Correctional Facility, has proclaimed his innocence from the very start. He and his family have hired a private investigator, Anthony Hodge, to find evidence clearing Howard's name. A \$2,000 reward is being offered for any new information leading to the arrest and conviction of whoever the true assailant is. Witnesses who have previously testified are not eligible to receive the reward.

Howard, who was had been arrested before Davis' murder on "unrelated charges," says Hodge, was identified by a witness from a display of mug shots, arrested, tried and convicted for killing Davis. Hodge said Howard was not even in the vicinity of the crime when it occurred.



ANTHONY HODGE
—private investigator

"He was with his family" at their home at 993 Fairwood Ave., when the crime occurred, Hodge said.

Hodge believes witnesses may have been coerced by homicide and robbery detectives into identifying Howard as the assailant. These detectives have since been dismissed from the force for unethical practices, Hodge said.

Hodge also believes Howard may have been convicted because he is Black and Davis was white. "This makes things a little bit harder to get a fair trial," said Hodge.

Howard spent most of his time in prison at a death row facility. He is now serving a 25 years to life sentence.

"My client has spent the better years of his life in jail. Tim Howard was convicted by a single eye-witness, coming forth after 66 days," said Hodge. "Evidence found was a partial palm print. No guns, no money, nor was there any other physical or circumstantial evidence." Hodge also said the testimony of three witnesses placed Hodge away from the scene of the crime. *Howard*

Anyone who has new information related to Howard's case can contact Hodge at (235-1400) National City Bank and Burns Security are also offering rewards for new information.

Until Howard is cleared and released from prison, Hodge will continue to investigate the case. He says the case has caused Howard and his family a great deal of emotional distress, adding, "This is a lot for an innocent man to go through."