



October 2, 2025

On October 1, we filed a petition for certiorari review in the United States Supreme Court as well as an application to stay the execution date set for Charles Ray Crawford.

Crawford's inexperienced trial counsel *conceded* his guilt to the jury—against Crawford's timely and repeated objections. Crawford told his counsel to pursue a *not guilty* verdict. Counsel did just the opposite, which is precisely what the U.S. Supreme Court says counsel cannot do. The concession of Crawford's guilt, over his objections, is a structural error. A structural error is a mistake that severely impairs the entire trial's fairness, making it invalid and requiring a new trial.

Crawford's case illustrates the dangerous breakdown in the adversarial system that occurs when an attorney admits guilt over a competent client's repeated objections. Crawford's trial attorneys conducted no investigation before trial; performed very little cross-examination during trial; hired no guilt phase experts; and failed to engage any government expert testimony to posit a credible and supportable countervailing theory to what the state claimed the evidence showed.

But the evidence did not—and does not—show everything that the government's untested theory purportedly showed. For example, the knife belonging to Crawford that was the supposed murder weapon could not have been the murder weapon. A nationally-accredited forensic pathologist has now opined that “there is no scientific evidence to support [the] conclusion that the U.S. Marine Corps Ka-Bar knife caused the stab wound.” Worse, the former Sheriff who worked on the case provided an affidavit saying that another knife with what appeared to be blood on it was located. That knife was never provided to the defense. There is also no chain of custody of key evidence; the fingerprints on the victim's vehicle do not match Crawford; and there is inconsistent testimony by officials.

For an explanation of the errors in Crawford's case, his post-conviction petition can be found here: [https://courts.ms.gov/appellatecourts/docket/sendPDF.php?f=400\\_698125.pdf&c=98852&a=N&s=2](https://courts.ms.gov/appellatecourts/docket/sendPDF.php?f=400_698125.pdf&c=98852&a=N&s=2)

The U.S. Supreme Court petition can be found here: [https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/25/25-385/378408/20251001152524630\\_Crawford%20Cert%20Petition.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/25/25-385/378408/20251001152524630_Crawford%20Cert%20Petition.pdf)

We hope the U.S. Supreme Court will grant certiorari review and stay the execution date.

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