

# THE WITCH HUNT CONTINUES

by Tom Watson, April 14, 2009

I just read an article in the LA Times reviewing the *Witch Hunt* video, and thought it would be interesting to see this video. So I followed the links looking for a viewing time somewhere, and found none. What I did find was that it appears the Innocence Project is using this video for fund raising. They have quite a list of options for purchasing this video, everything from a single DVD to multiple performance packages for several hundred dollars. To say the least, I am disappointed that the Innocence Project is more interested in making money off of this video than they are in getting it viewed by as many people as possible.

Did you know that the last person from the Bakersfield sex ring witch hunts to be cleared was finally released just two months ago? That was Grant Self, who was released from Coalinga State Hospital on February 6, 2009. Although Self was not one of those profiled in the *Witch Hunt* video, as with the others convicted in the Bakersfield sex ring witch hunts, the victims all recanted and the abuses of the justice system were again revealed.

In the case of Self, by the time the victims recanted he had served his entire prison sentence. But instead of being released at the end of his prison sentence, Self was civilly under the SVPA and sent to Atascadero State Hospital then moved to Coalinga State Hospital when it opened. During this time, Self also served his entire period of California parole, but while still incarcerated in a state hospital.

One would think that when the victims recant, and the justice system abuses that cause a wrongful conviction are exposed, that a factually innocent person would be released. This just is not how it works in real life. After Self's victims recanted and told how they were coerced, the Kern County justice system nevertheless venomously fought against Self's release. Self spent approximately another five years filing writs and appeals before finally being released on February 6, 2009.

The story doesn't end there. For Self, the Witch Hunt continues. Upon his release, Self went to live with his brother at Lake Arrowhead, California. The citizens of that area, like the rest of California, evidently have the witch hunt mentality embedded in their psyche. They did what witch hunters do best, and managed to get an eviction notice served on Self sometime around the middle of March, giving him two weeks to vacate the area. At this time, there is no further information available.

Even though Self was exonerated of the crimes for which he served a prison sentence, his life will never be the same. He is still being treated as a pariah.

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For more information on the Kern County Justice System, recommended reading is the National Bestseller from 1999, *Mean Justice*, by Edward Humes. Published by Pocket Star Books, ISBN: 0-671-03427-8. This book contains many stories of abuses in Kern County, the sex ring stories are just some of those told in the book. When this book was first released, it was banned in the California prisons. It is now allowed.