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# PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:  
May 31, 2019

FOR INFORMATION:  
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**Statement from Cook County State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx on  
Today's Release of Records Regarding Smollett Case**

On May 23, 2019, Judge Steven Watkins issued an order lifting the seal on the files and documents related to the criminal prosecution of Jussie Smollett. On May 31, 2019, the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney will release over 2,000 pages of documents related to the case.

In a continuing effort to provide transparency into the operations of this office, Cook County State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx has authorized the one-time disclosure of certain materials the public is not normally able to obtain in criminal or civil cases. These documents include, among other things, the work product of her senior felony trial staff, settlement communications, and documents which are exempt from Freedom of Information requests.

The material also reveals that the State's Attorney was advised to "recuse" herself (i.e. remove herself from her Office's involvement in the case) solely based upon rumors that she was related to Smollett -- which she is not. In fact, attorneys within the office advised against using the term "recusal" in this context, given that there was no actual conflict of interest. Those communications were not escalated to the State's Attorney herself.

Along with this material, Cook County State's Attorney Kimberly Foxx released the following statement:

"This has been a unique case from the very beginning, where the victim became the suspect during the investigation. Allegations of a vicious homophobic and racially motivated attack shook our city and the nation with understandable anger and fear.

I did not have a conflict of interest in this case; only a sincere desire to serve the community. I spoke with Mr. Smollett's family and others while he was still considered to be the victim of a hate crime in an effort to streamline the case and alleviate any concerns about the integrity of the investigation.

False rumors circulated that I was related or somehow connected to the Smollett family, so I removed myself from all aspects of the investigation and prosecution and delegated my authority and responsibility to my First Assistant so as to avoid even the perception of a conflict.

I regret that my attempts to this end created confusion outside the office. The public's trust is paramount to our work. That is why today I am releasing material above and beyond what is required. It is my sincere hope that this transparency and the ongoing investigation of the Cook County Independent Inspector General will provide guidance and lessons on how to serve you better. I am sorry that despite the best intentions, our efforts were less than what was required of the moment."

*The State's Attorney's Office works to uphold public safety through the fair and efficient administration of justice. Follow @SAKimFoxy and @CookCountySAO on Twitter and Facebook for breaking news updates.*

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