



Archie Williams on #AGT

“Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me”

[Archie Williams](#) was wrongly incarcerated for 35 years and 11 months.



"America's Got Talent" / CNN

"Days turned into weeks, into months, into years, and into decades. It's like a nightmare...When you know you're facing a dark time, what I would do is I would pray and sing. This is how I got peace...I would watch America's Got

On May 26, Archie Williams's dream came true. He received a standing ovation on America's Got Talent, wowing both judges and the audience alike.



"America's Got Talent" / The Oprah Magazine

In 1983, Williams was convicted for the rape and attempted murder of a 31-year-old white woman in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

"I couldn't believe it was really happening. I knew I was innocent; I didn't commit a crime. But being a poor black kid, I didn't have the economic ability to fight the state of Louisiana."

With the help of the [Innocence Project](#) & the [Innocence Project New Orleans](#), fingerprints from the crime scene were examined and connected to a serial rapist that had since died in prison, and Williams was cleared and freed on March 21, 2019.

Williams is one of 52 exonerees on the Registry's ["Longest Incarcerations" list](#). Each of the 52 exonerees listed spent more than 30 years in prison between the date of their conviction and the date of their release. If we tracked exonerees who spent 25 or more years wrongly incarcerated, the list would triple.

May 2020: 11 Exonerations Posted

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[Keyon Sprinkle](#) & [Clarence Williams](#), both of Boston, MA, were convicted of murder and accessory to murder, respectively, in 2002. They were exonerated in 2020 after witnesses identified the real shooter.

In 1996, [Victor Perez](#) was sentenced to 20 years in prison for a murder in Elgin, IL. After his conviction was reversed and dismissed for insufficient evidence in 2000, he was granted a pardon and awarded \$127,000 in compensation.

In 2012, [Darell Chancellor](#) was sentenced to 14 to 30 years in prison for possession of cocaine in Detroit, MI. He was exonerated in 2019 based on evidence that he did not live in the home where the drugs were found and the police officer in the case was under investigation.

In 1988, [James Fagan](#) was sentenced to life in prison for sexual assault in the first criminal case based on DNA in MI. He was granted a new trial and the case was dismissed because the testing company over-stated its statistical conclusion.

[Yusuf Smith](#) of Baltimore, MD, was convicted in 2018 of a weapons violation. He was exonerated that same year after body-camera footage showed an officer had committed perjury at Smith's trial.

In 2013, [Art Tobias](#) was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison after he falsely confessed to committing a murder at age 13 in Los Angeles, CA. He was exonerated in 2016 after his confession was suppressed and evidence of the real killer that had been withheld by prosecutors was finally disclosed.

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