



John Ausby's exoneration

Last month, we published the case of [John Ausby](#), who was exonerated on April 20, 2020. He had been released from prison three months earlier, after serving 47 years, 4 months, and 18 days for a murder and rape in Washington, D.C., in December 1971. Ausby's time lost to a wrongful conviction is the most of any case in the Registry, and he joins 247 other men and women who lost at least 25 years in prison to a wrongful conviction.

For a wrongful incarceration of nearly 50 years, Ausby's case received very little coverage in the media. After a judge vacated Ausby's conviction for murder in 2019, the case dropped out of sight while his attorneys looked for a procedural path to vacate the rape conviction, which was tied up in complicated jurisdictional issues. These were resolved on April 21, 2020. That was too late for Ausby to savor his victory. He had died three weeks earlier.

Part of the state's case against Ausby relied on an analysis of hair found at the victim's home. An FBI agent testified that more than two dozen of the hairs were "microscopically identical" to samples provided by Ausby. In 2015, as part of a sweeping review of hair analysis by FBI agents, the government said the hair testimony in Ausby's case was false and misleading. That led to his release from prison in 2019. Ausby is one of 125 exonerees for whom microscopic hair comparison analysis contributed to their conviction. A Registry report on these cases is expected to be published before the end of this year.

At the Registry, we are constantly searching for cases, following up on leads, and poring over court documents. Our goal is to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of our database. This includes the cases where wrongfully convicted defendants served decades in prison, as well as cases where innocent men and women were given probation or exonerated before sentencing. Every Story Counts.

We published nine other exonerations in our main Registry in July, and we published two cases in our Groups Registry.



Edgardo Colon embraces his attorney after release (Photo: Brian Cassella/Chicago Tribune)

9 Other Individual Exonerations; 2 Groups Published in July

In 2017, [Edgardo Colon](#) was sentenced to 84 years in prison after he falsely confessed to being the getaway driver following a robbery at a convenience store that left an off-duty Chicago police officer shot dead. He was exonerated in 2023 based on cell phone records concealed by the prosecution that showed he was elsewhere at the time of the crime.

In 1995, [Adam Carmon](#) was sentenced to 85 years in prison for the murder of a seven-month-old child and wounding of the child's grandmother. He was granted a new trial, and the charges were dismissed in 2023 based on the failure of the prosecution to disclose exculpatory evidence, false testimony by detectives, and false statements by the prosecution during the trial.

[Maxwell Tatum](#) pled guilty to drug possession in Martin County, Florida in 2018. He was exonerated in 2019 after the deputy who arrested him was fired for falsifying drug field tests, planting evidence, and falsifying paperwork.

In 2006, [Richard Horton](#) was sentenced to 23 years in prison for a robbery and assault in Columbus, Ohio. He was exonerated in 2023 based on DNA testing that excluded him as the source of DNA found on an expended shell casing at the scene of the crime and by evidence pointing to another man as the robber.

In 2001, [Joseph Shelton](#) was sentenced to five years in prison for failing to register as a sex offender in Dallas, Texas. His conviction was vacated and the case was dismissed by an appeals court. In 2003, he was awarded \$6,250 plus an annuity of \$54,576 under the Texas compensation statute.

In 2005, [Joseph Janke](#) was sentenced to 60 years in prison for a shooting that wounded two people. He was granted a new trial and acquitted at a retrial based on evidence from a shooting victim that Janke was not one of the gunmen.

[Kevin Johnson](#), of Durham, North Carolina, was convicted of attempted murder of a police officer and related crimes in 2010. He was exonerated in 2023 after his co-defendant recanted his testimony that connected Johnson to the crime.

[Christopher Flowers](#), of Houston, Texas, pled guilty to a drug offense in 2013. He was exonerated in 2023 after the officer involved in his arrest was tied to misconduct in other cases.

In 1987, [William Cascone](#) was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of second-degree murder and arson for a house fire that killed three people in North Adams, Massachusetts. He was exonerated in 2023 after a reinvestigation of the case said the initial arson investigation was flawed and falsely concluded that the fire was set.

In the Groups Registry, we published two cases based on police misconduct in California.

At least [17 defendants](#) in California had their convictions vacated between 1999 and 2001 after an investigation into misconduct by two officers in the Central Division of the Los Angeles Police Department.

[Fifteen persons](#) arrested in Pittsburg, California, had their convictions vacated and charges dismissed after the post-conviction disclosure of impeachment evidence against the officers involved in their arrests.

With your support, the National Registry of Exonerations can protect the innocent by preventing false convictions.

We find the stories. We painstakingly search for every false conviction in the United States that is overturned and meets our criteria for exoneration. We gather the information, study the cases, and code the data, fueling the most comprehensive public database of exonerations that exists.

We tell the stories. One by one, we write and share the human stories behind each individual exoneration. We bear witness to these incredible injustices to ensure that they are remembered.

And we count the stories. Thousands of exonerees. Tens of thousands of years lost to wrongful incarceration. Untold costs paid by our communities. This independent collection of data allows us to understand how false convictions occur and prevent them from happening in the future.

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