

## A Living Archive

As the Registry adds cases week after week, the total number of exonerations on our home page gradually increases. But some visitors to our site might have noticed a recent decline in the number of exonerations.

This reduction in the number of cases in our main Registry came about after we revisited our decision to include more than 100 cases where Illinois defendants received certificates of innocence for weapons-possession convictions that were based on a statute later declared unconstitutional. After careful review of the cases in light of our criteria for inclusion, we determined that the convictions had been vacated for purely legal reasons and did not involve a post-conviction re-examination of the evidence in the case. We therefore determined that these cases belonged not in the individual Registry, but instead in our Groups Registry.

At the Registry, we have a commitment to transparency and accuracy. The Registry is a living archive, and that means we are constantly updating, correcting, and improving our work documenting wrongful convictions. Sometimes that process is messy and complicated, but we believe that the data we gather and the stories we tell are too important to cut corners.

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### 16 Exonerations Published in February



*Exoneree India Spellman embraces her mother. (Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Inquirer)*

In 1990, [Clifford Stevens](#) was convicted of sexual abuse of a developmentally disabled 12-year-old girl and sentenced to six months in prison. He was granted a new trial in 1995 and the case was dismissed based on the failure of his defense lawyer to interview witnesses contradicting the girl's account or to obtain medical evidence that Stevens was physically incapable of the assault the girl claimed had occurred.

[Randy Gray](#) was sentenced to three years in prison in 2014 for investment fraud in Oregon. He was granted a new trial because the trial judge had erroneously barred evidence that Gray had paid some investors back and was attempting to refund others. He was acquitted at a retrial in November 2022.

[Dionisio Polanco](#), of Providence, Rhode Island, was convicted of assault in 2008. He was exonerated in 2011 after two witnesses came forward and said Polanco was not the assailant.

In 2019, [Keith Davis Jr.](#) was sentenced to 50 years in prison for murder in Baltimore, Maryland, after his fourth trial, despite defense claims that police had planted the murder weapon on him to cover up the fact that they shot him while pursuing him for an unrelated crime. Davis was granted a new trial in 2021, and the case was dismissed by the prosecution in 2023.

[Albert Ian Schweitzer](#) was convicted in 2000 of murder and other charges in the highly publicized death of a tourist on the island of Hawaii. He was exonerated in 2023, after DNA testing and other forensic evidence pointed to Schweitzer's innocence and undermined the state's theory of the case.

[Kevin Guidetti](#) pled guilty to an assault charge in Hull, Massachusetts, in 2010. He was exonerated in 2018 after the victim of the alleged assault said that she falsely accused Guidetti of the crime.

[Kenrard Broussard](#), of Lafayette,

[Lamont Campbell](#) was convicted of murder in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2016. He was exonerated in 2023, after a judge ruled that his attorney had been ineffective and the state had failed to disclose that the lead officer was romantically involved with an eyewitness.

In 1985, [George Toca Jr.](#) was convicted of murder during a robbery in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was exonerated in 2022, based on new evidence that bolstered his alibi and the disclosure of statements that undermined the witness identifications in the crime.

[Tyree Lawson](#) was convicted of attempted murder and other charges in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 2009. He was exonerated in 2018 after a witness said the state's main witness had testified falsely about the shooting.

In 2011, [Darrill Henry](#) was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder in 2004 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was exonerated in 2023 after DNA tests excluded him from biological evidence found under one victim's fingernails and from the wallet of the other victim.

[Carlton Heard](#), of Cleveland, Ohio, pled no contest to attempted murder and other charges in 2016. An appellate court threw out his conviction in 2017, ruling that the trial judge had coerced Heard's plea, and he was acquitted at trial in 2018 after his attorney was able to cast doubt on Heard's involvement in the shooting.

In 2014, [Sandro Caban](#) was sentenced to 12 years in prison for stealing a purse from a car parked at a cemetery in Niles, Illinois. The conviction was vacated for insufficient evidence, Caban was granted a certificate of innocence in 2020, and he was awarded \$80,000 in state compensation.

In 1981, [John Huffington](#) was sentenced to death in Maryland for a double murder. He was granted a new trial and convicted and sentenced to death again in 1983. His sentence was

Louisiana, was convicted of drug possession in 2011. He was exonerated in 2016 after the deputies involved in his arrest were convicted in federal court of unrelated charges that called into question their credibility as witnesses at Broussard's trial.

In 2015, [Joshua Bargery](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a double murder in Ridgely, Tennessee. He was granted a new trial based on prosecutorial misconduct and erroneous judicial rulings. In 2022, Bargery was acquitted at a retrial after presenting evidence that the crime was likely committed by three men who were members of the so-called Mexican Mafia.

later reduced to life in prison. In 2013, he was granted a new trial based on DNA testing that excluded him from hair found on the clothing of one of the victims. He entered an Alford plea and was released. In 2023, he was granted a pardon based on innocence.

In 2013, [India Spellman](#) was sentenced to 30 years to life in prison for two crimes—a robbery and a murder—in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was exonerated in 2023 based on the prosecution's failure to disclose exculpatory evidence and her co-defendant's recantation of his claim that she was involved in the crime.

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**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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