



THE NATIONAL REGISTRY  
OF EXONERATIONS

## Los Angeles County Police Misconduct Report Out Now

Last month, we published a report on police misconduct in Los Angeles County, California, written by Simon Cole, the Registry's director, and Juan Sandoval, a doctoral student at the University of California, Irvine, where the Registry is based.

The report, which can be viewed [here](#), is part of our continued effort to develop new, collaborative ways to use the data we collect on wrongful convictions. In recent years, legislators in many states, including California, have enacted laws that increase the transparency around police misconduct, making it easier to track officers with histories of corrupt or problematic behavior.

The Los Angeles report was designed to evaluate the robustness of our data, which often includes the names of officers whose misconduct has contributed to a wrongful conviction. A similar report was prepared by the Innocence Project on cases out of New York City.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the report found that our exacting research pays off. In all of the Registry's cases from Los Angeles where there is documented misconduct by police officers, our research identified the officers by name. This allows other researchers to build their own databases that are focused on police misconduct and creates pathways for future reforms aimed at ensuring that the officers who engage in misconduct don't slip through the cracks.

**Speaking of reports, our in-depth examination of the use of microscopic hair comparison analysis is being released later this month, as part of a collaboration with the Marshall Project and Mother Jones. Check our social media postings for more information.**



*Bruce Murray, right, and his attorney, Michael Engle.*

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## **We published 14 exonerations in November**

In 1983, [James Reyos](#) was sentenced to 38 years in prison for the murder of a Catholic priest in Odessa, Texas. He was exonerated in 2023 based on fingerprint evidence connecting three other men to the crime.

In 2008, [David Sparks](#) was convicted of murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and sentenced to life in prison without parole. He was exonerated in 2023 after two witnesses recanted and the state disclosed evidence not given to his trial attorney that pointed to another man as the likely shooter.

In 1995, [Dwayne Williams](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was exonerated in 2022 based on the failure of the prosecution to disclose police reports that contradicted the sole eyewitness's testimony, as well as

**fingerprint evidence from one of the guns used in the shooting and from the car driven by the shooters that excluded Williams.**

**In 2014, [Faheem Davis](#) and [Curtis Kingwood](#) were sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2023 based on the disclosure that one of the detectives, Philip Nordo, had engaged in misconduct by sexually soliciting suspects during interrogation and another detective falsely testified that Nordo took no part in the interrogation.**

**In 1994, [Nicholas Escamilla](#) was sentenced to 29 years in prison and [Tyrone Reyna](#) was sentenced to 25 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. They were exonerated in 2023 based on evidence that they falsely confessed after they was physically abused by Chicago police detectives.**

**In 1994, [Miguel Morales](#) was sentenced to 45 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2023 based on evidence that Chicago police detectives physically abused a witness to falsely accuse Morales and evidence that detectives coerced two co-defendants to falsely implicate him.**

**[A.L. Pryor](#) was convicted of battery on a law-enforcement officer in October 2022. She was exonerated a month later, after a new analysis of body-cam footage supported her claim that she was not near the deputy at the time the officer was hit.**

**In 1983, [Gerald Howell](#) was sentenced to life in prison for a murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2023 after the real killer confessed, three witnesses recanted their identifications of Howell saying they were coerced by police, and the prosecution was found to have suppressed exculpatory evidence.**

**In 1983, [Bruce Murray](#), of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. He was exonerated, after serving more than 40 years in prison, based on undisclosed evidence that supported Murray's claim that he was not involved in the shooting.**

**[Cassandra Black Elk](#), of Bismarck, North Dakota, pled guilty to child neglect in the death of her infant daughter in 2022. She was exonerated in 2023 after a judge ruled that her**

attorney had provided ineffective representation by urging her to plead guilty before the final autopsy report, which said the infant's death was unexplained, was filed.

In 1994, [Danyale Gill](#) was sentenced to 14 years and 8 months to 40 years in prison for a shooting in Portland, Oregon. He was exonerated in 2023 after the real gunman confessed to the crime.

In 2000, [Shawn Schweitzer](#) pleaded guilty to manslaughter and kidnapping charges in the highly publicized death of a tourist on the island of Hawaii. His brother, Albert Ian Schweitzer, was convicted of murder at a trial that same year. Ian was exonerated in January 2023, and Shawn followed in October 2023, after DNA testing and other forensic evidence pointed to their innocence and undermined the state's theory of the case.

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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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5544 Social & Behavioral Sciences Gateway  
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