



Race and Wrongful Convictions

On September 27, we released [Race and Wrongful Convictions in the United States](#). This report, principally the work of Samuel Gross, our senior editor and a co-founder of the Registry, does much more than just update Sam's first report on race and wrongful convictions, published five years ago.

First, the database for our research—3,200 wrongful convictions—is nearly 70 percent larger than before. This allows us to draw more conclusions and see new patterns detailing the insidious nexus between race and wrongful convictions. If there's one statistic worth taking away from the report, it's this: **Innocent Black people are 19 times more likely to be convicted of drug crimes than innocent whites.**

The Race Report details the often-poisonous impact of the so-called War on Drugs on Black defendants. Our research comes after the launch of our [Groups Registry](#), which details systemic misconduct by official actors, mostly in the prosecution of drug crimes. The wrongful convictions of these defendants receive far less attention than wrongful convictions for violent felonies, but the toll they take on innocent defendants can be devastating and persistent.

On October 6, President Biden pardoned thousands of men and women convicted in federal courts of possession of marijuana. "Sending people to jail for possessing marijuana has upended too many lives—for conduct that is legal in many states," he said on Twitter. "That's before you address the clear racial disparities around prosecution and conviction. Today, we begin to right these wrongs."

We released the Race Report the week before Wrongful Conviction Day, which was on October 2. This year's theme: Collective Impact. We couldn't agree more. Together, through research and advocacy, we can make a difference.

Exonerations Posted in September

[Jaime Rios](#) was sentenced to 36 years in prison in 1990 for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2022 based on evidence that detectives coerced a false confession from him and coerced witnesses to falsely identify him.

In 1996, [Gamalier Rivera](#) was sentenced to 45 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2022 based on evidence that the lead detective, Reynaldo Guevara, had a history of misconduct,

In 1990, [Johnny Flores](#) was sentenced to 40 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2022 based on evidence that one of the detectives, Reynaldo Guevara, had a history of framing people.

[Ronald Williams](#), of Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced to 10 to 20 years in prison in 2010 for beating a man at a carwash so severely the man died. Williams was acquitted in retrial in 2013 based on cell phone evidence showing he was miles away at the time of the beating.

In 2011, [Gregory Council](#) was sentenced to 30 years in prison for child abuse in Jacksonville, Florida. He was granted a new trial based on evidence that the child's injuries could have been accidental. He was acquitted in a retrial in 2015.

[Herman Williams](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole in 1994 for the murder of his ex-wife in Lake County, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2022 by DNA testing and other expert analysis that discredited the prosecution's case and pointed to another unidentified male.

In 2013, [Phillip Owens](#) was sentenced to 13 years in prison for shooting at his ex-wife and their 3-year-old son in Monroe County, New York. He was granted a new trial and the case dismissed based on evidence that the allegation was false and the shooting never occurred.

In 2018, [Larry Lucas](#) was sentenced to 18 months in prison for illegal possession of a knife. His conviction was overturned because the knife was not subject to the illegal possession law. He received a certificate of innocence in May 2022 and was awarded \$50,000 in compensation.

including coercing witnesses to falsely identify defendants.

In 2010, [Paul Smith](#) was sentenced to four years and eight months in prison for soliciting a former jail inmate to physically harm a sheriff's deputy in Orange County, California. The conviction was vacated and dismissed in 2022 because a pattern of misuse of informants by the sheriff cast doubt on the former inmate's testimony.

[Michael Thompson](#) was convicted in 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah, of sexual misconduct based on false accusations by his stepsister. He was exonerated in 2014 after an appeals court found that a state's expert witness was unqualified and that Thompson's attorney had failed to object to improper closing arguments by the prosecutor.

[Darron Carmon](#) was convicted of armed robbery in Winterville, North Carolina, in 1994, when he was 19 years old. Although released from prison in 2001, he was exonerated in 2022 after his attorneys found exculpatory fingerprint evidence that hadn't been disclosed to his trial attorney.

[Nathaniel Dale](#), [Christopher Moore](#), and [Richard Smith](#) were convicted of drug possession in Benton Harbor, Michigan. They were exonerated after two police officers were found to have engaged in widespread misconduct that led to the [wrongful convictions](#) of more than 60 people.

[George Stewart](#) and [Frank Shaw](#) were convicted of drug possession in Camden, New Jersey. They were exonerated in 2010 after an [investigation](#) into the city's police force uncovered evidence that officers planted drugs, committed perjury and engaged in a wide range of illegal activities.

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.

Your donations power the Registry. Please donate today.



Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).