



*A Monthly Summary of Registry Postings*

## September 2020: 11 Exonerations

*Upcoming: Wrongful Conviction Day*



*Curtis Flowers was tried six times and wrongfully imprisoned for 23 years. (Photo: APM)*

**This month witnessed one of the longest awaited exonerations in American history. Curtis Flowers, who endured no fewer than six trials by racially skewed juries, was exonerated on September 4, 2020. You can read our summary [here](#), succinctly written and painstakingly**

Flowers went through two mistrials and four convictions, all of which were eventually reversed. He was sentenced to death four separate times. The case eventually made it to the U.S. Supreme Court, where the justices voted in 2019 to reverse Flowers's final conviction based on racially discriminatory jury selection by prosecutors in Montgomery County, Mississippi.

The Flowers case is filled with the important data points we track at the Registry. It contained mistaken witness identification, forensic evidence problems, official misconduct, perjury, and the use of jailhouse informants.

It also speaks to the power of new media such as podcasts as a tool of investigative reporting. While Flowers was represented by a wide range of top-flight defense attorneys, his case was investigated by [In the Dark](#), which dug deep into witness recantations and the tactics of the district attorney in keeping Black citizens from the jury box.

**Read Curtis Flowers's story on the Registry.**



*Ronnie Long was wrongfully incarcerated for 44 years after a police officer failed to disclose exculpatory evidence. (Photo: Peter Weinberger/AP)*

Another podcast, [Undisclosed](#), explored the wrongful conviction of Ronnie Long, from Concord, N.C., who was exonerated in late August 2020. He was in prison for nearly 44 years. Like that of Curtis Flowers, Ronnie Long's wrongful conviction was based on

**Read Ronnie Long's story on the Registry.**

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## 11 Exonerations Posted in September

Browse our [recently posted](#) exonerations, including:

[John Scott](#) was sentenced to 25 years in prison in 1997 for armed robbery and related crimes in Queens, New York. His conviction was vacated in 2001, and the New York Court of Claims found him to be innocent in 2006.

[Michael O'Laughlin](#), of Lee, Massachusetts, was sentenced to 35 to 50 years in prison for attempted murder and other charges in 2002. His charges were dismissed in 2009 after a federal appeals court ruled that he was convicted based on insufficient evidence, and that compelling evidence pointed to another culprit.

In 2016, [Frances Salazar](#) was sentenced to six years in prison in Phoenix, Arizona for drug possession. She was exonerated in 2018 based on evidence that the prosecution failed to disclose that the arresting officer had falsely arrested a woman in a separate case.

In 1997, [Curtis Flowers](#) was sentenced to death for a quadruple murder in Winona, Mississippi. The conviction was reversed and he was ultimately tried a total of six times before the charges were dismissed in 2020 after numerous witnesses recanted their testimony.

In 1994, [Troy Burner](#) was sentenced to 30 years to life in prison for the murder of one man and attempted murder of another in Washington, D.C. He was exonerated in 2020 after a key witness recanted and alibi witnesses said Burner was elsewhere at the time of the crime.

[Robert DuBoise](#) was sentenced to death in 1985 after being convicted of murder and attempted sexual battery in Tampa, Florida. He was re-sentenced to life in 1988, and he was exonerated in 2020 based on newly tested DNA evidence and a reassessment of the validity of the bite mark evidence used to convict him.

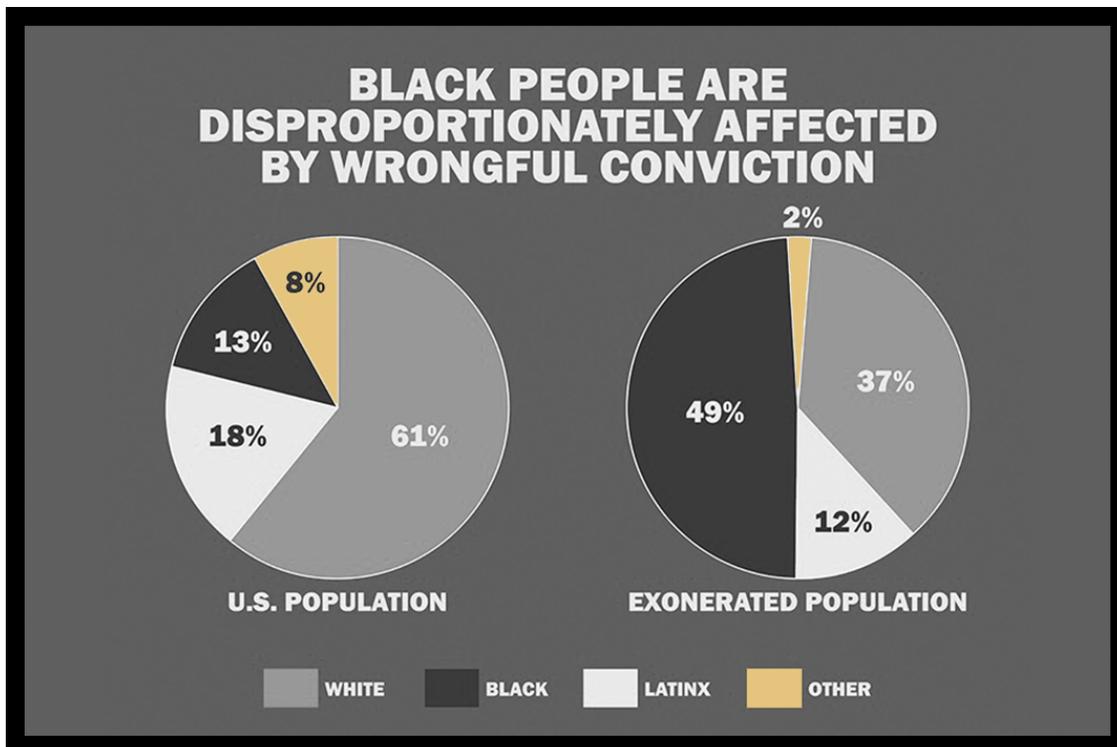
In 2013, [William Arnold Jr.](#) was sentenced to 25 years in prison for sexually assaulting an 11-year-old boy in Nashville, Tennessee. He was exonerated in 2020 based on evidence that the boy's accusation was false.

In 1993, [Ronnie Qualls](#) was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder in Boston, Massachusetts. He was exonerated in 2020 by DNA testing that linked another man to the murders.

In 2014, [Esther Thorne](#) of Norfolk, Virginia, was sentenced to 17 years in prison for child sexual assault and related crimes. The Virginia Court of Appeals

North Carolina in 1976. He was exonerated nearly 44 years later, after a federal appellate court ruled that a police officer had committed perjury and exculpatory evidence had not been disclosed to Long's attorneys.

[Rachel Scott](#) of Houston, Texas, pled guilty to drug possession in 2017. She was exonerated in 2020 after the officer who made the arrest was investigated for falsifying evidence in other cases.



As [Wrongful Conviction Day](#) approaches on October 2, consider supporting the National Registry of Exonerations. The Registry provides comprehensive information about exonerations of innocent criminal defendants in order to prevent future false convictions. Our recently released [report on official misconduct](#) highlights the role of prosecutors, police, and other law enforcement in wrongful conviction, which disproportionately impacts communities of color.

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