



## A 30-Year Lie

Last month, we published the fascinating case of [William Woods](#), who was exonerated of identity theft in Los Angeles, California. As our summary notes, it turned out that it was Woods who was the victim of identity theft and betrayal. David Keirans, whom Woods befriended briefly in New Mexico in 1988, had stolen his personal information and used it for more than 30 years. When Woods attempted to expose him, Keirans falsely accused Woods of being the identity thief.

Maurice Possley, our senior researcher, said he ran across this case after reading a story in the *Washington Post* about the conviction of the scammer.

"I wondered if there was an exoneration in there or potential for one since Woods had pled guilty to stealing the Keiran's ID," Possley said. "I did a little Googling and found out that he had been prosecuted in federal court in Iowa."

"So I sent an email to the federal prosecutor explaining that I was curious if the conviction of the identity theft victim had ever been vacated. He nicely referred me to the victim/witness advocate. She agreed to email Woods, who lives in New Mexico. And he emailed me, saying that on Thursday, April 11, the district attorney in Los Angeles was going to move to vacate and dismiss the conviction."

Possley said the federal court documents contained a detailed recitation of Keiran's devious activities over the years, which he incorporated into the summary to better explain the devastating toll this long-running scam took on Woods.



*William Woods*

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We published 18 other exonérations in April.

[Timothy Puskas](#), of New Brunswick, New Jersey, was convicted of murder in 2017. He was acquitted at retrial in 2024, based in part on new testimony that narrowed the window of the victim's time of death.

In 2001, [Gilbert Merritt III](#) was convicted of murder in Norfolk, Virginia. He was exonerated in 2024, after the state's main witness recanted and said that a police officer coerced her into testifying falsely at Merritt's trial.

In 2002, [Frank Burrell](#) was sentenced to 32 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that he was at work at the time of the crime, as well as evidence that he did not have access to a car fitting the description of the vehicle used in the shooting.

[Charles "C.J." Rice](#) was convicted in 2013 of attempted murder and related charges in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2024, after a federal judge found that his trial

attorney was ineffective.

[Charles Williams](#), of Hartford, Connecticut, was convicted of unlawful restraint in 2014. He was exonerated in 2024, after an appellate court ruled that the state failed to turn over impeachment evidence against the alleged victim in the case.

In 1999, [Frank Drew](#) was sentenced to 60 years in prison for a murder in Evanston, Illinois when he was 16 years old. He was granted a new trial and the case was dismissed in 2024 after two witnesses admitted they had falsely accused him of being the gunman.

In 2007, [Stephen Patterson](#) was sentenced to 50 years to life in prison for a murder in Los Angeles, California. He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that identified the suspected real gunmen and evidence that he was home at the time of the crime.

In April 2023, [Christine Holmes](#) was sentenced to 30 days in jail after pleading guilty to possession of amphetamine in Conroe, Texas. She was exonerated in 2024 because a lab test was negative for the presence of an illegal substance.

In 2017, [Ivan Robinson](#) was convicted in federal court on charges that he misprescribed oxycodone. He was exonerated in 2023 after an appellate court ruled that the government had failed to disclose exculpatory evidence supporting Robinson's claim that he had notified officials to stop fraudulent prescriptions.

In 1994, [Jerry Gillespie](#) was sentenced to 40 years in prison after he falsely confessed to a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that police beat him into confessing and the real killers admitted their involvement in the crime.

[Gregory Williams](#), of Lubbock, Texas, pled guilty to failure to register as a sex offender in 2018. He was exonerated in 2023, based on new evidence that showed his registration requirement had ended years before he was charged.

In 2019, [Laronda Turner](#) was sentenced to life in prison for taking part in a triple murder in Memphis, Tennessee. In 2024, the Tennessee Supreme Court vacated her conviction and dismissed the case after her lawyers argued that the prosecution failed to disclose information that impeached the only witness that linked Turner to the crime.

In 2003, [Alphonso Davis](#) was sentenced to 50 years in prison for a shooting that killed one teen and wounded another in Albany, New York. He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that the two men who implicated him had recanted their accusations and evidence that the lead detective had coerced a false confession from Davis.

In 1984, [Jerry Davis](#) was sentenced to life without parole for a murder in New Orleans, Louisiana. He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that the two witnesses who implicated him were the actual perpetrators and because the prosecution withheld exculpatory evidence.

In 2013, [Brandon Washington](#) was convicted of two assault counts for his alleged role in a shooting near Sacramento, California. A judge granted Washington a finding of actual innocence in 2023, after an appellate court ruled there was insufficient evidence to support his conviction.

In 2014, [Anthony Robinson](#) was sentenced to 55 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois.

He was exonerated in 2024 based on evidence that he was elsewhere at the time of the crime and was on crutches, so he could not have fled on foot as witnesses described at the time.

In 1983, [Gregory Holden](#), of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. He was exonerated in 2024, after serving more than 40 years in prison, based on undisclosed evidence that supported Holden’s claim that he was not involved in the shooting.

[Dale Wilson](#), of Medford, Oregon, was convicted of burglary and other charges in 2016. He was exonerated in 2022 after a witness recanted and an appellate court ruled that his trial attorney had been ineffective by failing to exclude hearsay evidence.

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