



## The Registry Helps Inform the Conversation

Two years ago, the Registry published a landmark report, *Race and Wrongful Convictions in the United States*. Its principal author was Samuel Gross, a senior editor and co-founder of the Registry.

The first lines of the executive summary said:

“Black people are 13.6% of the American population but 53% of the 3,200 exonerations listed in the National Registry of Exonerations. Judging from exonerations, innocent Black Americans are seven times more likely than white Americans to be falsely convicted of serious crimes.”

The Registry’s ability to state the problem so clearly is the result of our exacting efforts to accurately enter all known exonerations into our database.

Last month, the race report’s findings made their way into a [ruling](#) by Judge Carlton Reeves in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi that denied a detective’s request to use a defense of qualified immunity in a lawsuit seeking damages for false imprisonment. Judge Reeves also said that qualified immunity has no clear basis in the law.

“Another obvious consequence of qualified immunity, though, is a perpetuation of racial inequality,” Judge Reeves wrote. Using the Registry’s research as well as the work of other scholars, he continued, “Research indicates that Black Americans are pulled over more often, searched more often, arrested more often, imprisoned more often, wrongfully convicted more often, and killed by law enforcement more often than other Americans.”

His ruling is likely to be appealed. This debate is important. And it’s one more example of how the Registry’s data and research helps inform the conversation around criminal-justice issues.



*Donald Raynor (center, left) with mother-in-law Aida De Jesus (left), mother Candy Law (center, right) and former teacher Ginger Mealy (right). (Photo provided by Donald Raynor to the Hartford Courant.)*

We also published eight exonerations in May.

[Charles Heard](#) was convicted in 2010 of a murder in San Francisco, California. He was exonerated in 2020 after testimony in a related prosecution supported Heard's assertion that his conviction was a case of mistaken identity.

[Donald Raynor](#) was convicted of murder in Hartford, Connecticut in 2015. He received a new trial in 2020 and was acquitted in 2024, in part based on new scientific information that undermined the accuracy of the firearms evidence used to link Raynor to the murder weapon.

In 2008, [Kainte Hickey](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a shooting in Detroit, Michigan, that killed one man and wounded another. He was granted a new trial and acquitted in 2024 based on testimony of witnesses that he was elsewhere at the time of the crime.

[Tyrik Guy](#), of Houston, Texas, pled guilty to a drug offense in 2018. He was exonerated in 2024 after the officer involved in his arrest was tied to misconduct in other cases.

[Michael Gastile](#), of Houston, Texas, pled guilty to a drug offense in 2014. He was exonerated in 2024 after the officer involved in his arrest was tied to misconduct in other cases.

In 2003, [Luis Galarza](#) was convicted of two counts of murder in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He was exonerated in 2024, based on undisclosed evidence that impeached several witnesses about their motives for testifying against Galarza.

In 2001, [Quincy Amerson](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole after being convicted of murder in the death of a 7-year-old girl whose body was found on a rural road in Harnett County, North Carolina. He was exonerated in 2024 after a new forensic review of the crime scene said the girl's death was an accident that could have been caused by vehicles other than the one driven by Amerson.

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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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