



New Report & 20 Exonerations

The National Registry of Exonerations just published an important [new report](#) on the roles that medicolegal death investigation and forensic pathology played in convicting the innocent.

The study reviewed 151 exoneration cases in which death investigation, or death investigators, contributed to the underlying wrongful conviction. The 151 exonerees lost a total of 1,837 years in prison, an average of 12.2 years per exoneree.

The study suggests that the contribution of death investigation to wrongful convictions is not merely a product of inadequate training, resources, or regulation. While it is true that the approximately 500 board-certified forensic pathologists in the United States are insufficient to conduct all the autopsies needed, board-certified forensic pathologists performed the death investigation in 92 (61%) of the cases. While many argue that coroner systems should be replaced by medical examiner systems, coroner systems were not responsible for a disproportionate number of wrongful convictions. And, while only 17% of death investigation offices in the U.S. are accredited, 22% of the wrongful convictions occurred under those offices.

The study suggests that cases involving female defendants and child victims, including cases of “shaken baby syndrome” or “abusive head trauma,” were especially at risk for wrongful conviction. This report shows the Registry’s data in action, providing context and clarity to researchers seeking to understand the factors that contribute to wrongful convictions. Please take a read and let us know what you think.

We also published 20 exonerations in July.

In 2016, [Ronald Cornish](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Baltimore, Maryland. He was granted a new trial because the prosecution had not disclosed inconsistent statements by the only witness to the crime. In 2024, Cornish was acquitted at a retrial.

[Mason Shannon](#) was convicted in 2018 of involuntary manslaughter after an altercation at a plant nursery in LaSalle County, Illinois. After receiving a new trial because of a perceived conflict of interest by the trial judge, he was acquitted at retrial in 2024, based in part on

new testimony about the actions of Shannon, the victim, and law enforcement during the incident.

In 1998, [Montrell Oliver](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for a murder in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2024 based on testimony that he was elsewhere at the time of the crime.

In 2003, [Connie Dahl](#) falsely confessed to taking part in a murder and falsely implicated her boyfriend, Ricky Davis. She pled guilty and was sentenced to a year in jail. In 2024, four years after Davis was exonerated and the real killer was convicted, Dahl, who had died in 2014, was posthumously exonerated because her confession was false.

In 1976, [Marvin Grimm Jr.](#) was sentenced to life in prison in Richmond, Virginia for the abduction, sexual assault and murder of a three-year-old boy. He was exonerated in 2024 based on DNA testing that excluded him as the source of physical evidence that a forensic analysis had erroneously characterized as Grimm's.

In 1993, [Kent Gorham](#) was convicted by a non-unanimous jury of child sex abuse in Lane County, Oregon. He was exonerated in 2023, after a court ruled that the verdict was unconstitutional. In previous motions, Gorham had presented statements from expert witnesses challenging the state's forensic evidence and the methods used to obtain that evidence.

In 2006, [Michael Samanta](#) was sentenced to 25 years in prison for the murder of a 12-year-old boy in Chicago, Illinois. He and his co-defendant, Francisco Romero, were exonerated in 2024 after a witness said Romero was not the gunman.

In 2006, [Francisco Romero](#) was sentenced to 65 years in prison for the murder of a 12-year-old boy in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2024 after a witness said he was not the gunman.

[Roderick Bell](#), [Bobby Garnous](#), [DeQuentun Mitchell](#), and [Melvin Mitchell](#), all of Houston, Texas, pled guilty to drug offenses between 2013 and 2016. They were exonerated in 2024 after the officer involved in their arrests, former Houston Police Officer Gerald Goines, was tied to misconduct in other cases.

In 2007, [Mumin Slaughter](#) was convicted of murder in the death of an off-duty police officer in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2024, after an eyewitness recanted her testimony and prosecutors agreed that they had failed to turn over evidence undermining the testimony of two eyewitnesses.

In 2000, [Nolan Ryan Overstreet](#) pled guilty in Tarrant County, Texas, to failure to register as a sex offender. He was exonerated in 2024 after the courts ruled that Overstreet's conviction didn't require him to register in Texas.

[Andrey Kalugin](#) and [Laura Gallagher](#) were sentenced to 15 months in prison in 2022 in federal court in Virginia for immigration fraud. They were granted new trials in 2023, and the charges were dismissed in 2024 because they were not allowed to present evidence undermining the claim that their marriage was a sham.

In 2011, [Eric Ogilvie](#) was convicted of assault and a weapons charge after an altercation outside his house in Taylor, Michigan. He was exonerated in 2024 after he uncovered 911 tapes that supported his claim of self-defense in the incident.

In 2017, [Desheen Evans](#) was sentenced to 2 years and 8 months to 4 years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to traffic two girls under the age of 13 for sex in the Bronx, New York. Evans was exonerated in 2021 based on evidence that she had been beaten and coerced by a human trafficker.

In 2014, [Jorge Valle-Ramos](#) was convicted of burglary and theft in Orlando, Florida. He was exonerated in 2024 after an eyewitness recanted her identification of Valle-Ramos as one of the burglars.

In 1988, [Anthony Goodin](#) was sentenced to life in prison for a murder in Valdosta, Georgia. He was granted a new trial and acquitted at a retrial in 1989 based on testimony that another man committed the crime.

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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