



More Than 400 Exonerations Published in 2022

Last year was an extraordinary year at the Registry. We published 417 exonerations of men and women wrongfully convicted of crimes. It's the most we've published in a single year since our launch in 2012. By comparison, we recorded 227 exonerations in 2021, and 170 in 2020. We now have more than 3,300 exonerations in our main database.

Of the 417 exonerations we published in 2022, 268 of them *occurred* in 2022. This is also a record number. The spike in 2022 can be largely attributed to one state: Illinois. We recorded more than 90 exonerations from Cook County (Chicago), where defendants were framed by a corrupt police officer who patrolled and terrorized a public-housing neighborhood between 2003–2011. Including cases from previous years, there are [180 exonerees](#) tied together by this systemic misconduct. Separately, we recorded more than 50 exonerations for Illinois men convicted of weapons violations that the Illinois Supreme Court later found to be unconstitutional.

These cases, where dozens of men and women are exonerated based on roughly the same set of facts, challenge our research and editing process. But we don't take shortcuts. Our team approaches them with the precision, accuracy, and care used for more complex, headline-grabbing cases. We never forget that each case represents a person harmed through injustice.

In December, we collaborated with the Innocence Project and published an important paper that reconciles both organizations' research on [forensic evidence and DNA exonerations](#). Simon Cole, the Registry's director, was the lead author. It is a richly detailed and highly readable explanation of the work we do in building out our database. Take a look and let us know what you think.

From all of us at the Registry, we hope you had a restful and restorative holiday season. Thank you to everyone who donated to the Registry as 2022 drew to a close. Your donations power our work, and we are grateful for your support. You can donate through our [fundraising portal](#).



Frederick Jeffrey was exonerated based on evidence that he was framed by a corrupt police officer. (Photo courtesy of the Houston Chronicle)

46 Exonerations Published in December

In 2020, [Gonzalo Gonzalez](#) was sentenced to five years in prison after he pled guilty to possession of drugs and assaulting a police officer. He was exonerated of the assault charge in 2020 based on previously undisclosed audio recordings that showed no assault occurred.

In 1996, [Cordell Williams](#) was sentenced to life in prison without parole for murder in Chicago, Illinois. His conviction was vacated and the case was dismissed in October 2022 based on evidence that he was physically abused during interrogation until he falsely confessed.

In 1989, [Leroy Harris](#) was sentenced to 80 years in prison for sexual assault and robbery in New Haven, Connecticut. He was granted an absolute pardon in 2022 based on DNA evidence that

[Rodney Brown](#), of Baltimore, Maryland, was convicted in 2006 of assault during a home invasion. He was exonerated in 2021, after new DNA testing contradicted trial testimony that said Brown was likely present at the crime scene.

[Paul Crum Jr.](#), of Clintwood, Virginia, pled guilty to obstruction of justice in 2015. He was exonerated in 2022, after the Virginia General Assembly declared him wrongfully incarcerated because his attorney advised him to plead guilty without properly investigating the facts of the alleged crime.

[Edwin Davila](#) was sentenced in 1996 to life in prison for murder and attempted murder in Chicago, Illinois. The convictions were vacated and the case dismissed in November 2022 based on evidence pointing to another man as the

excluded him from the crimes.

[Darryl Williams](#) was convicted of robbery and related crimes in 2014 in Queens, New York. He was exonerated in 2022, after new cell phone records supported his alibi that he was at home at the time of the robbery.

[Shamel Capers](#), of Queens, New York, was convicted of second-degree murder in 2017. Capers, who was 15 years old when the shooting occurred, was exonerated in 2022 after an eyewitness recanted.

In 2018, [Frederick Jeffrey](#) was sentenced to 25 years in prison for possession of methamphetamine in Houston, Texas. He was exonerated in 2022 based on evidence that he was framed by Gerald Goines, a corrupt Houston police officer.

gunman as well as evidence that the lead detective, Reynaldo Guevara, conducted a tainted lineup and coerced false confessions and false identifications in other murder cases.

[Maheer Obagi](#) was convicted in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California of bank fraud and conspiracy in 2015. An appellate court granted him a new trial in 2020 because the government had failed to disclose impeachment evidence. During his retrial, Obagi's case was dismissed, based on other prosecutorial misconduct.

In 1992, [Tracy Brown](#) was sentenced to 10 to 35 years in prison for a cocaine sale in Houston, Texas. He was exonerated in 2022 based on evidence that he was not present when the drug sale occurred.

As noted above, we published 35 exonerations for men and women convicted in Illinois of aggravated unlawful use of a firearm. After an appeals court ruled the gun law was unconstitutional, these defendants obtained certificates of innocence and received compensation for their wrongful convictions. They are: [Larry Austin](#), [Maurice Brooks](#), [Jerome Craft](#), [Ruben Alcazar](#), [Jerry Gilmore](#), [Jerry Griffin](#), [Miguel Hernandez](#), [Paul Hill](#), [Juan Lewis](#), [Corey Rice](#), [Kerwin Cross](#) (two separate exonerations), [Samuel Gayden](#), [Brandon Owens](#), [Ramone Palmer](#), [Esteban Miranda](#), [Jesus Parra](#), [Delaurence Robinson](#), [Jermaine Johnson](#), [Alexander Gonzalez](#) (two separate exonerations), [Mario Herring](#), [Eric Hill](#), [Roger Hawkins Jr.](#), [Devin Seats](#), [Thomas Lenoir](#), [Steven Hamilton](#), [Garret Whittenburg](#), [Michael Johnson](#), [Lester Jennings](#), [Emanuel Rivera](#), [Gerald Lauderdale](#), [De Aaron Williams](#), [Aaron Payne](#), and [Darryl Austin](#).

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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