



THE INNOCENCE
PROJECT
2014 ANNUAL
REPORT

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law,
Yeshiva University

“I WANT TO KNOW

WHAT FREEDOM

IS ABOUT.”

ph Abbitt / Habib Wahir Abdal / Christopher Abernathy / Kenneth Adams / Gilbert Alejandro / Richard Alexander / Marvin Anderson / Steven Barnes / Jonathan Barr / Chester Bauer / Antonio Beaver / Gene Bibbins / Phillip Bivens / Michael Blair / Kirk Block / Brewer / Johnny Briscoe / Dale Brison / Jimmy Ray Bromgard / Dennis Brown / Danny Brown / Leon Brown / Nathan Brown / Paul / Kevin Byrd / Dean Cage / Leonard Callace / David Camm / Anthony Capozzi / Anthony Caravella / Terry Chalmers / Anthony / Cotton / Sedrick Courtney / Uriah Courtney / Stephan Cowans / Roy Criner / McKinley Cromedy / Alan Crotzer / Rolando Cruz / Davis / Dewey Davis / Cody Davis / Larry W. Davis / Jeramie Davis / Frederick Daye / James Dean / Wilton Dedge / Jeff Deskovic / Doswell / Gary Dotson / Cornelius Dupree / Timothy Durham / Douglas Echols / James Edwards / Clarence Elkins / Lonnie E / Dennis Fritz / Larry Fuller / Donald Eugene Gates / James Curtis Giles / Larry Gillard / Bruce Godschalk / Angel Gonzalez / Gray / Paula Gray / Edward Green / Kevin Green / Michael Green / Michael Anthony Green / William Gregory / Byron Halsey / Haynesworth / Chad Heins / Eugene Henton / Alejandro Hernandez / Anthony Hicks / Larry Holdren / Jeffrey Holemon / Dan / James / Lesly Jean / Jerry Lee Jenkins / Verneal Jimerson / Albert Johnson / Calvin Johnson / Larry Johnson / Richard Johnson / Kenneth Kagonyera / Entre Nax Karage / William Kelly / John Kogut / Paul D. Kordonowy / Kerry Kotler / Ray Krone / Barry L / Mahan / Dale Mahan / Dennis Maher / Michael Marshall / Anthony Massingill / Ryan Matthews / Larry Mayes / Curtis McCarty / McMillan / Leonard McSherry / Michael Mercer / Billy Wayne Miller / Neil Miller / Robert Miller / Jerry Miller / Randy Mills / Michelle Murphy / Ricky Lee Nelson / Bruce Nelson / Robert Nelson / Willie Nesmith / Alan Newton / Alan G. Northrop / James / Pacyon / Maurice Patterson / Freddie Peacock / Marlon Pendleton / Jamie Lee Peterson / Larry Peterson / Michael Philips / / Willie Rainge / John Restivo / Donald Reynolds / Kevin Richardson / James Richardson / Gerard Richardson / Harold Rich / Larry Ruffin / Fredric Saecker / Yusef Salaam / Ben Salazar / Raymond Santana / Eric Sarsfield / Omar Saunders / Michael S / Smith / Billy James Smith / Frank Lee Smith / Walter Snyder / Bennie Starks / Frank Sterling / Robert Lee Stinson / David / Thames / Damon Thibodeaux / Victor Larue Thomas / Hubert Thompson / Phillip Leon Thurman / James Tillman / Steven To / Velasquez / Armand Villasana / James Waller / Patrick Waller / Gregory Wallis / Billy Wardell / Douglas Warney / Earl Wash / Thomas Webb / Bernard Webster / John Jerome White / Joseph White / Arthur Lee Whitfield / Drew Whitley / David Wiggins / / Johnny Williams / Ron Williamson / John Willis / Calvin Willis / Thomas Winslow / Korey Wise / Glen Woodall / James Lee

“I REMEMBER MY FIRST DAY COMING HOME FROM PRISON. I SAT UP AND WATCHED THE SUN COME UP THAT MORNING. . . . TO ACTUALLY FEEL IT AS A FREE MAN OUTSIDE OF THE FENCES, IT WAS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE. THE WHOLE TIME. . . I [WAS] SAYING, ‘I’M FREE. I’M TRULY FREE.’ ”

Marvin Anderson, exoneree and Innocence Project board member, reflects upon his first day of freedom

The Innocence Project was founded in 1992 by Barry C. Scheck and Peter J. Neufeld at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University to assist prisoners who could be proven innocent

through DNA testing. To date, more than 300 people in the United States have been exonerated by DNA testing, including 20 who served time on death row. These people served an average of 14 years

in prison before exoneration and release. The Innocence Project’s full-time staff attorneys and Cardozo clinic students provided direct representation or critical assistance in most of

erson / Randolph Arledge / Herman Atkins / Steven Avery / William D. Avery / David Ayers / James Bain / Bennett Barbour
dsworth / Donte Booker / Orlando Boquete / Larry Bostic / Marcellius Bradford / Ted Bradford / Mark Diaz Bravo / Kennedy
Roy Brown / Keith Brown / Patrick Brown / David Johns Bryson / Ronnie Bullock / Harold Buntin / Victor Burnette / A.B. Butler
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Erby / Michael Evans / Jerry Lee Evans / Charles Irvin Fain / Scott Fappiano / Joseph Fears Jr. / Wiley Fountain / Joseph Frey
Hector Gonzalez / Kathy Gonzalez / Donald Wayne Good / Bruce Dallas Goodman / Andrew Gossett / David A. Gray / Anthony
/ Dennis Halstead / James Harden / William O'Dell Harris / Clarence Harrison / Nathaniel Hatchett / Travis Hayes / Thomas
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/ Henry Lee McCollum / Robert McClendon / Antron McCray / Arvin McGee / Thomas McGowan / Lawrence McKinney / Clark
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Saunders / Calvin Lee Scott / Samuel Scott / Dwayne Scruggs / Shainne Sharp / Debra Shelden / David Shephard / Walter D.
Brian Sutherland / Josiah Sutton / Terrill Swift / Ronald Gene Taylor / Ada JoAnn Taylor / Robert Taylor / Paul Terry / Vincent
ney / Raymond Towler / Jerry Frank Townsend / Santae Tribble / Keith E. Turner / David Vasquez / Robert Lee Veal / Eduardo
ington / Calvin Washington / Leo Waters / Kenny Waters / Jerry Watkins / John Kenneth Watkins / Mark Webb / Troy Webb /
Robert Wilcoxson / Michael Anthony Williams / Dennis Williams / Willie Williams / Derrick Williams / James Curtis Williams
Woodard / Anthony D. Woods / Kenneth Wyniemko / Anthony Yarbough / Nicholas Yarris / Kenneth York / Larry Youngblood

**“I WAS LOCKED UP WHEN I WAS 23 AND I WASN’T RELEASED
UNTIL I WAS 40. SIXTEEN YEARS, 2 MONTHS, 8 DAYS,
TO BE EXACT. . . . THE PEOPLE AT THE INNOCENCE
PROJECT, THEY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO HELPING ME.
I COULDN’T WANT ANYTHING MORE THAN THE INNOCENCE
PROJECT TO CONTINUE ITS WORK.”**

Nathan Brown, Innocence Project client and 2014 exoneree

these cases. The Innocence Project’s groundbreaking use of DNA technology to free innocent people has provided irrefutable proof that wrongful convictions are not isolated or rare

events but instead arise from systemic defects. Now an independent nonprofit organization closely affiliated with Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, the Innocence Project’s mission

is nothing less than to free the staggering number of innocent people who remain incarcerated and to bring substantive reform to the system responsible for their unjust imprisonment.



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MAKING STRIDES TOWARD JUSTICE

LETTER FROM THE CO-DIRECTORS, BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the Innocence Project, protecting and restoring freedom for the innocent is the centerpiece of our mission. To achieve that goal, we use a two-pronged approach: leveraging the fact-finding science of DNA evidence to exonerate the scores of people who are in prison or on death row for crimes they didn't commit; and building better laws and instilling practices that will remake the criminal justice system into one that prevents wrongful convictions in the first place.

In 2014, the Innocence Project achieved significant victories that will advance our overall pursuit of freedom for innocent people and redefine our criminal justice system.

First, the Innocence Project helped to exonerate five individuals—Randy Mills, Nathan Brown, Michelle Murphy, Ricky Nelson and Rickey Dale Wyatt. Through the relentless efforts of our legal team as well as our exceptional partners from across the country, these exonerees joined the ever widening circle of exonerated men and women who are courageously restoring their lives and reclaiming their innocence.

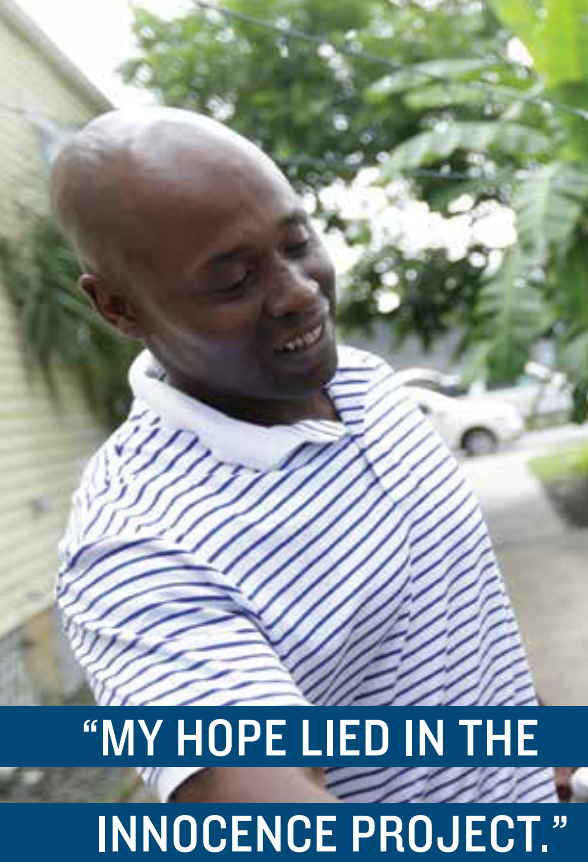
On the policy front, we successfully cultivated powerful allies in law enforcement and lobbied lawmakers and other constituents on both sides of the aisle. As a result, Illinois, Vermont and Maryland passed laws that will mandate their police departments to enact scientifically reliable eyewitness identification procedures. New Jersey passed a law to improve its compensation for each year someone was wrongfully incarcerated, which we hope will prevent exonerated people from living impoverished lives upon release from prison.

In our efforts to strategically reform courtroom practices, we engaged courts around the treatment and admissibility of forensic and identification evidence. Our efforts received a tremendous boost when the National Academy of Sciences released a groundbreaking report that discussed what three decades of robust scientific research tell us about eyewitness misidentification—the leading cause of wrongful convictions overturned by DNA evidence in the United States. The report confirmed many of the Innocence Project's recommendations for improving identification collection procedures.

Collectively, these laws and best practices are reshaping our legal system. In turn, we are seeing that justice is served. The 2014 exonerations alone are a testament to that. Indeed, steadily, our country is moving in the right direction, thanks in great part to our generous supporters who are helping us pave the way for a more just and fair criminal justice system.

Barry C. Scheck, *Co-Director*
Maddy deLone, *Executive Director*

Peter J. Neufeld, *Co-Director*
Senator Rodney Ellis, *Board Chair*



**“MY HOPE LIED IN THE
INNOCENCE PROJECT.”**

NATHAN BROWN

“A lot went wrong in this case. A crime happened and there was a rush to judgment. No one stopped and scrutinized on any side. People just didn’t hear his screams that he was innocent.”

—Vanessa Potkin, Innocence Project senior attorney speaking to the *Times-Picayune* regarding Nathan Brown’s wrongful conviction on the day of his release and exoneration

In 2002, Nathan Brown wrote a half-page letter to the Innocence Project from a Louisiana state penitentiary. A judge had sentenced him to 25 years for attempted rape—a crime he did not commit. No physical evidence linked him to the attack, but he’d been misidentified as the perpetrator and convicted, mainly because he was black.

Nathan said he prayed that the Innocence Project would help him. But, it wasn’t immediately clear whether that would be possible. Nathan’s case, while improperly handled by the police as well as his own attorney, did not appear to contain DNA evidence.

HOPE

Nathan Brown, reunited with his daughter, who was only three when he went to prison. He was rocking her to sleep at the time of the attack for which he would later be wrongly convicted.

PHOTO: AP PHOTO/GERALD HERBERT

But in 2010, everything changed. Edwin Grimsley—the Innocence Project analyst assigned to evaluate the case—saw something that altered the trajectory of Nathan’s life.

Edwin was reading Nathan’s trial transcript when he was struck by something in the victim’s testimony. During the attack, she said, she’d been bitten on her neck by the perpetrator.

In all of the case details that Edwin had gathered over the years, nowhere—not during the investigation, not in the police report—had the victim ever said that she’d been bitten. Even at the trial, her mention of the physical encounter was brief; neither the defense nor the prosecutor paid it any mind.

What would appear as a mere tidbit of information to others translated into new evidence to Edwin—evidence that just might save Nathan’s life. Edwin knew that if the attacker had bit the victim, it was possible he’d left saliva on the victim’s dress, potentially providing a DNA profile that would prove Nathan was not the attacker.

Ultimately, Edwin’s theory was correct. The DNA left on the dress was Nathan’s saving grace—the very thing that led to the Innocence Project proving Nathan’s innocence, and identifying the actual man who committed the crime.

Nathan’s story is extraordinary; his freedom hinged upon a single piece of evidence, and it was discovered not by luck, but through a rigorous, step-by-step analysis of his case. Every scrap of paper in Nathan’s file—page by page, line by line—was scrutinized just like every case before it and every case that has come since, leading Nathan to finding hope in a place where it seemed there was none.



On average,

2,776

people write to the Innocence Project annually asking for our help; that’s nearly 232 people every month.



9,000

applications evaluated in 2014



13,850

applications have been submitted over the past five years, equaling about 38 people per day asking for help

Michelle Murphy votes for the first time ever, one day after her 38th birthday and just months following her exoneration and release from prison.

PHOTO: TULSA WORLD/JOHN CLANTON



**“I WANT TO KNOW WHAT
FREEDOM IS ABOUT.”**

MICHELLE MURPHY

Michelle Murphy's case was one of the 230 cases the Innocence Project worked on in 2014.

For more than half of her life, Michelle Murphy was branded as being perhaps the worst kind of criminal: a mother who murdered her own baby. In 1995, a jury found Michelle guilty of stabbing to death her three-month-old son and sentenced her to life in prison without the possibility of parole. But on September 12, 2014, Michelle was exonerated. A judge declared that evidence proved that Michelle was innocent; the criminal justice system had failed her.

Exactly 20 years prior to being exonerated—in the early morning of September 12, 1994—Michelle awoke to find her infant son, Travis, dead on her kitchen floor. Oklahoma City police, eager to identify the culprit, aggressively interrogated Michelle—only 17 at the time—for seven and a half hours without a parent or guardian present. Hysterical with grief, Michelle gave a statement implicating herself of the crime. A detective had told her that she could see her eldest child—then two years old—if she admitted that she was guilty.

Despite the investigators and the prosecutor knowing that Michelle’s statement didn’t add up, and later finding evidence that pointed to another individual, Michelle was charged with murder and her confession was used against her in court.

Strong evidence suggested that the only supposed witness to the crime—a teenage boy who had long threatened to hurt Michelle—had, in fact, entered Michelle’s apartment and killed the child during the night. Forensic testing showed that there was blood from someone other than the victim at the scene. The then-district attorney had evidence that the foreign blood at the scene was inconsistent with Michelle’s blood type, but neglected to turn over that evidence to the court and instead led the jury to believe that the blood came from Michelle. Michelle would be convicted based largely on her own false statement.

Two decades later, Michelle was incarcerated at Mabel Bassett Correctional Center in Oklahoma City. In conjunction with Tulsa-based attorneys from O’Carroll & O’Carroll, the Innocence Project persuaded the trial court to grant new DNA testing of evidence found at the 1994 crime scene. Results proved that blood stains in the apartment belonged to a male, not Michelle.

Twenty years to the day that Travis was killed, Michelle walked into a courtroom, again looking for redemption. This time, Michelle was told the words she’d deserved to hear all along: “You’re innocent.”

MAKING STRIDES TOWARD FREEDOM: ANTHONY WRIGHT

For more than 23 years, Anthony has been awaiting his day of justice. In 1991, he was convicted of the rape and murder of an elderly Philadelphia woman. Finally last September a Philadelphia judge reversed the conviction based on new DNA testing that implicates another man. The Innocence Project continues to work on Anthony’s case while the district attorney’s office conducts further investigation and decides whether it intends to retry him for the crime.



ANTHONY WRIGHT, CENTER, WITH HIS SON AND NEPHEW
1991



ANTHONY WRIGHT, RIGHT, WITH HIS NOW-ADULT SON AND BABY GRANDDAUGHTER
2014

The numbers are striking: of the 329 people exonerated by DNA testing in the United States, 236 were wrongfully convicted—at least in part—because of eyewitness misidentification; that’s 72% of all DNA exoneration cases in the United States. Faulty forensics contributed to nearly 50% of the total cases.

The Strategic Litigation unit urges courts to be more regarding identifications and forensic practices that

Exonerees Kennedy Brewer, Steven Barnes and Dennis Fritz were wrongfully convicted based on unreliable forensic practices.



Kennedy Brewer

PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT



Steven Barnes

PHOTO: GARY WALTZ



Dennis Fritz

PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

The Innocence Project’s Strategic Litigation unit is a unique legal team—the only one like it in the country—comprised of experts who, through litigation, get the courts to better protect against wrongful convictions. The unit’s attorneys urge courts to develop better evidentiary rules that reflect the latest scientific research on the fallibility of memory and identification, and to set stricter boundaries on the use of forensic practices, like bite mark and microscopic hair analysis, that have not been scientifically validated.

In 2014, the National Academy of Sciences released a report on the collection and use of eyewitness evidence in court in light of 30 years of robust research on the science of memory and identification. Many of the report’s recommendations—which will help shape how law enforcement conducts line ups, inform policy at all levels, and determine the admissibility of eyewitness testimony in criminal trials—have long been used by the Innocence Project’s Strategic Litigation attorneys.

Last year, the Strategic Litigation unit trained thousands of defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges on how to better litigate scientific evidence. The unit also consulted and advised on criminal cases in jurisdictions all across the country, urging courts to vacate convictions that were based entirely on flawed evidence. Their efforts were fruitful. Courts in several states are now advising jurors to consider what science teaches us about vision and memory as they examine eyewitness testimony.

MAKING STRIDES TOWARD FREEDOM: EDDIE LEE HOWARD

With the Mississippi Innocence Project, the Strategic Litigation team urged the court to vacate Eddie Lee Howard's conviction, which rests nearly entirely on invalid bite mark evidence. Howard has served more than 20 years on death row for the murder of an elderly woman although post-conviction DNA testing in his case has excluded him as the source of DNA identified on the murder weapon. Strategic Litigation is waiting for the court's decision on whether Howard's conviction will be overturned.

critical and fair when witnesses testify are not based on science.

STATES THAT ARE GETTING IT RIGHT

NEW JERSEY: In 2011, New Jersey became the first jurisdiction nationally to reject the scientifically flawed test for evaluating eyewitness identification evidence that had been used in every part of the country since 1977. A year later, the state's supreme court issued jury instructions for cases involving eyewitness identification evidence. An unprecedented move, the instructions usher science into the courtroom and educate jurors about factors that affect the reliability of eyewitness identifications.

OREGON: In 2012, the Oregon Supreme Court issued a landmark decision requiring major changes in the way courts are required to evaluate identification evidence. The changes, designed to reduce the likelihood of wrongful convictions by taking into account more than 30 years of scientific research on eyewitness identification and memory, shifted the burden to the state to establish that the evidence is admissible. The decision now requires Oregon courts to consider the factors that may affect an identification's reliability and instructs courts, where appropriate, to employ remedies, such as limiting the witness' testimony and permitting expert testimony to explain the scientific research on memory and identification.

MASSACHUSETTS: The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court created a study group on eyewitness identification evidence to review research on eyewitness memory. The group released an excellent report in which it made five recommendations critical to ensuring improvement in the reliability of eyewitness evidence in court. The Innocence Project issued comments on the report and urged the state's supreme court to adopt all five of the issued recommendations.



In 2014,
the Strategic
Litigation unit
reached a total of

2,380

lawyers, judges
and forensic
practitioners
through trainings
and workshops.

**“WHEN I FIRST GOT OUT,
I WAS RELIEVED,
I WAS THANKFUL....**



**I HAD THOUGHT THAT
ONCE I PROVED MY
INNOCENCE, SOMEBODY
WOULD WANT TO GIVE
ME A BREAK. BUT, IF IT
WASN'T FOR YOU ALL...
I'D BE LIVING IN MY CAR.”**

—Randy Mills, reflecting upon the challenges associated with being a person exonerated of a crime

While in prison, exonerees have a laser focus on proving their innocence and securing their freedom. In the cases of exonerees like Randy Mills and Ricky Lee Nelson, however, life plans can fall short after being released.

For Randy and Ricky—both from Tennessee—their freedom was fraught with unfair challenges after the state refused to recognize their actual innocence. Both men were released from prison, their convictions overturned. But Randy was forced to live as a registered sex offender for more than two years, until he was exonerated in 2014. And Ricky, though declared not guilty last year—still carries a criminal record.

Both Randy and Ricky struggled to find permanent work, their records and reputations tarnished in the eyes of potential employers. For Ricky, the situation was even worse; he lacked a stable network of family and friends to whom he could turn for support.

RELIEF

Exonerees Randy Mills, left, and Ricky Lee Nelson, right, in Tennessee, celebrating Ricky's overturned conviction and release from prison.

PHOTO: KAREN WOLFF

The Innocence Project Social Work Department stepped in. They helped Ricky and Randy and other clients like them who needed a hand paying rent or stocking the pantry. They served as the safety net to those exonerees who had none. In 2014, the Innocence Project provided financial and practical assistance to each of our clients who we helped to exonerate that year. We purchased computers so that they could search for work. We paid utility bills when they didn't have money to keep on the heat. We covered medical care for exonerees who didn't have insurance. We bought cars so that those newly released could get to work and reconnect with family.

By late last year, things had started to turn around for Randy. He was married and found work. Today he's happy to have time to spend time with his grandkids.

Ricky is still trying to find his footing, looking for an apartment and relearning his way around his town. But he has a car and is looking for a job and he's working at re-establishing a relationship with one of his brothers.

As both men boldly navigate the early phases of their new lives, the Innocence Project will be there to offer them support—because freedom should be shaped by new opportunities, not ongoing struggles.

In Fiscal Year 2014, through its Exoneree Fund, the Innocence Project provided valuable financial assistance to exonerees, covering the following expenses:



housing



transportation



medical needs

YEAR IN REVIEW 2014

01 **January**—The Michael Morton Act goes into effect in Texas. The law aims to standardize discovery procedures across the state by requiring prosecutors to give defense lawyers access to evidence in the state's file without regard to the information's potential impact on the verdict. The law also extends the period of time in which complaints of prosecutorial misconduct can be filed.

02 **February**—The Innocence Project files new documents with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles in its posthumous pardon petition for



Cameron Todd Willingham. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

Cameron Todd Willingham, pointing to new evidence that strongly suggests that a jail house informant involved in the case received a deal from the then-Navarro County District Attorney John Jackson in exchange for his testimony.

03 **March**—A North Carolina district court reverses the double murder conviction of Darryl Howard based on new DNA evidence and prosecutorial misconduct. According to the court, Howard is entitled to a new trial because of the new DNA evidence pointing to other suspects and because the prosecutor violated Howard's constitutional rights by failing to turn



Family and other supporters of Darryl Howard await the judge's ruling on Howard's case in North Carolina. PHOTO: SAMEER ABDEL-KHALEK

over exculpatory evidence and soliciting false and misleading testimony from the detective on the case.

04 **April**—Randy Mills is exonerated of rape in Tennessee after serving 11 years in prison and living for two years as a registered sex offender. *"Randy Mills spent more than a decade locked up for a crime that more thorough investigation and careful forensic work would have revealed that he shouldn't have been charged with in the first place."*—Bryce Benjet, Innocence Project staff attorney who represented Mills.

05 **May**—The Federal Bureau of Investigation and other Justice Department agencies announce that they will begin recording almost every interrogation of suspects in federal custody in summer 2014.

06 **June**—Nathan Brown is exonerated of aggravated sexual assault in Louisiana. *"I was locked up when I was 23; I wasn't released until I was 40—16 years, 2 months, and 8 days to be exact."*—Nathan Brown.



Barry Scheck, left, Nathan Brown, center, and Vanessa Potkin on Brown's exoneration day. PHOTO: THE ADVOCATE/VERONICA DOMINACH

- Adrian Thomas, the subject of the award-winning film, *Scenes of a Crime*, is exonerated at his retrial in New York when he is found not guilty of killing his infant son. The Innocence Network filed an amicus brief urging the reversal of Thomas' conviction.
- Vermont Governor Shumlin signs into law criminal lineup reforms and mandates electrical recording of interrogations to prevent wrongful convictions.

07 July—Minnesota passes a compensation bill. Exonerees are entitled to receive from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for each year they spent in prison, plus reimbursement for other costs, and \$25,000 to \$50,000 for each year spent on probation or as a registered offender.

- Innocence Project files a grievance with the State Bar of Texas against the prosecutor who obtained Cameron Todd Willingham's conviction and death sentence.

08 August—Michelle Murphy is exonerated in Oklahoma based on evidence pointing to her innocence in the murder of her baby boy. *"I spent 20 years wrongfully in prison for something I didn't do, and I've been fighting all these years to prove that,"* Murphy told local television news station KOTV- CBS.

- Illinois passes eyewitness identification law, mandating that municipalities practice blind administration lineup. The state also expands its



DNA access law to allow inmates who pleaded guilty to get DNA testing in their cases.

Photo of police lineup in which exoneree Ronald Cotton was misidentified as rapist. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

- Twenty-five years of freeing the innocent!! First DNA-based exoneration—Gary Dotson, represented by Thomas M. Breen—occurred in August 1989.

09 September—Anthony

Wright's 1993 rape and murder convictions are reversed. Wright has served 23 years for a rape and murder that new DNA testing reveals were committed by another man. He remains in prison while he awaits news from the district attorney as to whether the case will be retried.



Innocence Project lawyers and family of Anthony Wright came out to a Philadelphia courthouse to lend him support in September 2014. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

- New York State Appeals Court judges reverse the convictions and dismiss the indictments against Everton Wagstaffe and Reginald Conner, two Brooklyn men found guilty of murder and kidnapping 20 years ago. The ruling is based

10 October—National Academy of Sciences issues landmark report on memory and eyewitness identification. Innocence Project urges adoption of its recommendations for improving police identification procedures.

- Maryland passes police lineup reform.

All law enforcement agencies are now mandated to conduct blind lineups.

11 November—Ricky Lee Nelson's rape conviction is overturned in Tennessee. He served nearly 25 years in prison.



Ricky Lee Nelson, right, with Innocence Project Social Worker Karen Wolff, center, and his brother. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT

12 December—*"The Court finds the defendant is actually innocent."*—Texas State District Judge Dominique Collins ruling on the case of Rickey Dale Wyatt, who served 31 years of a 99-year sentence for a rape that he did not commit. Wyatt's wrongful conviction was a result of the state concealing evidence that supported his innocence during the trial. Post-conviction DNA testing revealed



Rickey Dale Wyatt.
PHOTO: BEN TORRES

a partial male profile that excluded Wyatt. He is the 325th person in the United States to be exonerated by DNA testing.

on DNA testing and evidence of prosecutorial and police misconduct. Connor served 15 years in prison. Wagstaffe served 23 years.

We forged alliances with lawmakers, law enforcement leaders and legal experts to pass laws that will buttress states' efforts to prevent wrongful convictions. Some of these new laws mandate that investigations be guided by science-based practices to reduce bias and tunnel vision—factors that contribute to targeting the wrong people in criminal cases. Others will give all innocent people in prison access to DNA testing. And for those who have been wrongfully convicted and exonerated, new and improved legislation will see that they are fairly compensated in order to have a fresh start at making the most of their renewed freedom.

In 2014, the Innocence Project



NATHAN BROWN
PHOTO: THE ADVOCATE/
VERONICA DOMINACH

Eyewitness misidentification is the greatest contributing factor to wrongful convictions, playing a role in nearly 75% of DNA-based exonerations. Recent exoneree Nathan Brown was wrongly convicted based on an eyewitness misidentification that took place during a “show-up,” a highly suggestive and unreliable identification procedure.

SOLUTION: Scientifically proven and easy-to-adopt practices can significantly decrease the number of misidentifications.

2014 VICTORY: Leveraging partnerships with law enforcement and policymakers, the Innocence Project helped to get laws passed that mandate the use of superior and standardized practices in collecting identification evidence in Maryland, Illinois and Vermont, bringing the total number of states to adopt these practices to 13.



MICHELLE MURPHY
PHOTO: SHARISSE O'CARROLL

More than one out of four DNA-based exonerees made false confessions or incriminating statements that contributed to their wrongfully convictions. Exoneree Michelle Murphy was convicted based in part on a false confession that she made during a coercive interrogation process.

SOLUTION: The electronic recording of interrogations is the single best reform available to prevent wrongful convictions caused by false confessions.

2014 VICTORY: Vermont passed legislation that will require the recording of interrogations, making a total of 23 states that do so.



Innocence Project staff with Oregon Innocence Project and exoneree Ted Bradford (second from right), at the statehouse in Oregon to testify in support of a post-conviction DNA testing bill. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT



Innocence activist, Jennifer Thompson, testifying in Colorado on behalf of better identification practices. PHOTO: GARY STEFANSKI

accomplished critical policy reform.

Not every state has compensation laws. For those states that do, the laws vary widely and the level of benefits and compensation offered is not always sufficient. Exonerees, who lost valuable earning years in prison, are often left destitute.

SOLUTION: Adopting the compensation amount recommended by the federal government (adjusted for inflation) and the Innocence Project—a minimum of \$62,500 per year of being wrongfully imprisoned.

2014 VICTORY: New Jersey increased its compensation amount from \$20K per year to \$50K per year of wrongful imprisonment and added a range of social services to assist with reentry. And Vermont lifted its ban on granting compensation to exonerees whose cases were not DNA-based.

“My grandson looks at me and asks me for things—nice clothes, he wants to have a nice Christmas and all of that. It makes me feel awful. . . . I feel like I’m less than a man, that I’m not able to support my family. It hurts me inside. I’m full of rage and pain.”

—Calvin Willis, Innocence Project client in 2014 Associated Press article about lack of sufficient compensation

While all states now provide post-conviction DNA testing, many of the laws are limited in scope and substance. Not all inmates are provided access, especially those who falsely confessed or pleaded guilty.

SOLUTION: Allow access to post-conviction DNA testing wherever it can establish innocence, even if the petitioner is no longer incarcerated, and including cases where the petitioner pleaded guilty or provided a confession or admission to the crime.

2014 VICTORY: Illinois passed legislation to expand post-conviction DNA testing to those who pleaded guilty.

Innocence Project
Senior Attorney Vanessa
Potkin speaks with a
class of high school
students from Brooklyn.

PHOTO: CARLITA SALAZAR



In 2014, the Innocence Project produced a short film in which four men who were wrongfully convicted read excerpts—sometimes tearfully—from the first letters they ever wrote to the Innocence Project, asking for help. The purpose of the film is to give people an up-close and candid look at the grave injustices that anyone can face at the hands of a broken criminal justice system. Thousands of people have watched the film on YouTube and learned why even one wrongful conviction is too many.

THE INNOCENCE PROJECT informs the national conversation on wrongful convictions through public education.

As an advocacy group, the Innocence Project aims to inform the national conversation on wrongful convictions and to drive legislative change that will fix our flawed criminal justice system. One way we do this is through public education. We leverage all forms of media to foster awareness around the causes of wrongful convictions and to expose the legal and logistical challenges involved in securing our clients' freedom. We work with venues across the country to provide exonerees a platform from which to share their experiences. And we use our online and social media channels to advance public discourse and build comprehensive support around policies that will better deliver justice.

In 2014, we engaged some of the best people in print, radio and television to tell compelling stories about the issue of wrongful convictions and the need to enact reforms to prevent future injustice.

Benny Staris



Jonathan Barr



Marvin Anderson



Randy Mills



Exonerees speak about their experiences being wrongfully convicted in a film that the Innocence Project produced in 2014. To see the film, go to innocenceproject.org/about



We ramped up our social media efforts so to provide up-to-the-minute coverage about recent exonerees and their first moments of freedom, making stories of exonerees accessible to practically anyone. One photo, which captures Nathan Brown just moments after he was declared innocent, reached the feeds of **2.5 million Facebook users**, making it our most popular post ever.

On behalf of actor, producer and Innocence Project Artist Committee member Tony Goldwyn, the Innocence Project consulted closely with actors Marin Ireland and Paul Schneider for their starring roles as attorneys on the WE Network show *The Divide*, a scripted drama about a fictional innocence clinic. Ample media attention around the series debut featured full-segment interviews with both Goldwyn and Innocence Project Co-Director Barry Scheck on *The View* and *CBS Morning News*, **introducing millions of viewers to the work of the Innocence Project.**

The Innocence Project **collaborated with the Marshall Project on a front-page Washington Post investigation** into new evidence of prosecutorial misconduct in the case of Cameron Todd Willingham, who was executed in 2004 for the arson murder of his three young daughters. The story focused on newly uncovered documents which indicate that former prosecutor, John H. Jackson, made false statements and concealed evidence favorable to Willingham's defense. Jackson is now under investigation by the State Bar of Texas, which has filed a formal accusation of misconduct against Jackson. The former prosecutor faces sanctions.

In 2014, exonerees and Innocence Project staff spoke at **52 speaking engagements** held all around the country. That means that nearly every week of the year, a new audience learned about wrongful convictions, the power of DNA in securing justice, and the need for new policies to protect innocent people. At each event, exonerees shared their stories and the details of their cases. For those exonerees who were new to publicly presenting their stories, the Innocence Project hosted story telling training sessions with The Moth at our office in Manhattan and at the Innocence Network Conference in Portland, Oregon.



Melissa Lullo on the day of the New York City Half Marathon.

PHOTO: LAURA MA

This past spring, Melissa Lullo was a member of Team Innocence Project and ran the New York City Half Marathon to raise money for the organization. Melissa's father, Dennis Halstead, was exonerated in 2003 after spending 18 years in prison for a rape and murder he didn't commit. The Innocence Project consulted on his case and represented Halstead's co-defendant, John Restivo. Melissa reflected on her father's experience as her inspiration to finish the 13-mile course, which she said was a tough haul given that she's not a dedicated runner. But, when asked whether she'd consider running again next year, she confessed, "In the blink of an eye. Without the Innocence Project, my father would still be in prison. . . . If I can raise support for this organization, I'd do it all again."

“Without the Innocence Project, my father If I can raise support for this organization,

Melissa's sentiments—of being driven to go above and beyond for the sake of the wrongfully convicted clients and exonerees—are shared among the many individuals who donate to the work of the Innocence Project. Like Melissa, all of our donors are deeply connected to our mission. They establish close ties to the organization by staying well-informed about our work, whether it be through Q&A sessions with the organization's leaders or speaking events with our exonerees. And while, unlike Melissa, most donors do not have the exceptional experience of having a loved one who is an exoneree, all of them have a shared aim: to secure freedom for the wrongly incarcerated and to reform the laws that shape the criminal justice system.

EXONE



Laura Ma, Innocence Project staff member, cheers on runners raising support for the organization. PHOTO: INNOCENCE PROJECT



Actress Marin Ireland, accepting her award at "A Night Out to Benefit the Innocence Project," an annual event hosted by our Young Professionals Committee, in October 2014, where she was honored for her work to bring attention to wrongful convictions. PHOTO: YGOH

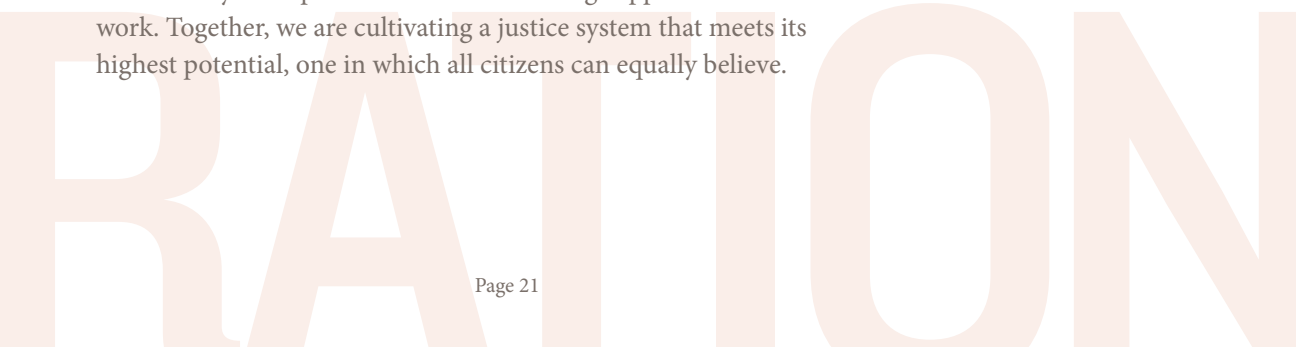
would still be in prison.... I'd do it all again."

Since 1992, the Innocence Project has been at the helm of a transformative criminal justice movement—a movement that has united a vast network of individuals—seemingly unlikely allies from across the political aisle and all demographics—in a collective endeavor to strengthen the criminal justice system with science. And as the breadth of our work has expanded, from exonerating our clients to also amending policy and fostering change in the courtroom, so, too, has the circle of our richly diverse supporters.

Because of these donors, the Innocence Project is spurring a sea change within the courts and law enforcement—proving innocence, apprehending actual criminals and grounding criminal justice in hard science. We are tremendously thankful to our many champions for their unwavering support of our work. Together, we are cultivating a justice system that meets its highest potential, one in which all citizens can equally believe.

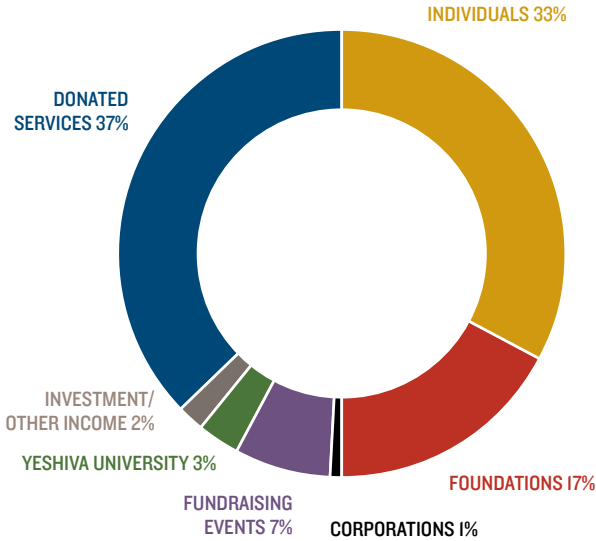


John Artis, co-defendant and longtime friend of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, at the Innocence Project's Eighth Annual Benefit—"A Celebration of Freedom & Justice"—in May 2014, where he eulogized Mr. Carter. PHOTO: LISA ROSS



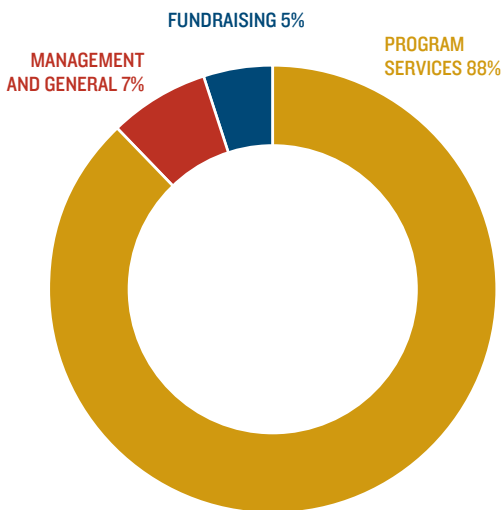
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OPERATING REVENUE

Individuals	\$5,588,540
Foundations	\$2,938,101
Corporations	\$153,751
Fundraising Events (Net)	\$1,203,464
Yeshiva University	\$425,000
Investment/Other Income	\$314,793
Donated Services	\$6,308,889
	\$16,932,538



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PHOTO: THE ADVOCATE/VERONICA DOMINACH

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Stephanie Berry, senior application developer

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Michelle Murphy, speaking to Oklahoma’s *News On 6* on the day of her exoneration



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Of the more than 300 exonerees listed on the first pages of this report, the Innocence Project was involved in 176 of the DNA exonerations. Others were helped by Innocence Network organizations, private attorneys and by pro se defendants in a few instances.

Exoneree Michelle Murphy on the day of her release from prison in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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