

## Another Wrongfully Convicted Person Freed



I saw [this article](#) in the Washington Post the other day. As a [criminal defense attorney](#), I continue to be amazed by these stories on several levels.

First, the level of technology, science, and sophistication that our society has reached continues to rise almost daily. And yet, we still have (most likely) thousands, if not more, prisoners serving extensive sentences for crimes they did not commit. How can this be? How is our criminal justice system still so flawed?

[Having said that](#), the incredible work of the many [innocence projects](#) around the nation also amazes me. If you don't already know, the innocence project is using today's technology, usually DNA evidence, to indisputably prove that many of these convicted people are innocent and obtain their release from prison after years and years of incarceration. The toll this takes on the individual is impossible to understand unless you have lived through this yourself, or watched a loved one endure it.

However, there is also a toll on society. The [costs of incarcerating](#) these individuals is astronomical. And, that is only the beginning because when these innocent victims of our system are freed - many have rights of actions against the municipalities that put them there costing our taxpayers even more money. Or, [several states have passed legislation](#) that sets the automatic compensation due to these wrongfully convicted people. Not to be callous to the individual stories, but the taxpayers are *double-paying* first to incarcerate and then after they are freed! Doesn't this warrant putting a little more effort into getting it right the first time simply for economic reasons? Especially in this day and age of shrinking budgets and states on the verge of bankruptcy.

The other amazing part is that many of these individuals were convicted based on one of two things: a [confession](#) or [eye-witness testimony](#). What we are quickly (though it should be quicker) learning is that these two seemingly sure-fire and reliable kinds of evidence used to gain convictions are actually [two of the most-flawed](#) as evidenced by what DNA is showing us. This, I believe, is the hardest pill to swallow for lay people or the uninformed. As a [criminal defense attorney](#) who has seen this first-hand and argued with these uninformed individuals, the idea that false confessions and eyewitness misidentification not only exist but are rampant is a very hard idea to accept intellectually. I do not mean to demean the uninformed, but only wish to point out the importance of educating the public on a more widespread level.

[Several films](#) have been made illustrating these issues, both [fiction](#) and [documentary](#). These are always amazing and triumphant stories, but are full of tragedy as well. And, for every one film or innocent person exonerated, how many countless ones still remain in custody with no hope and at exorbitant societal costs?

While I know our system will never be perfect, and it beats the hell out of a lot of other societies', is it wrong to expect a little more? [We](#) certainly don't think so - do you?