

Touched By The Light Publishing Prison Program

The Wall Project -Purchase A Book For A Prisoner

www.touchedbythelight.us

THE WALL PROJECT

"We are tasked by God to provide the word to other men because for without a teacher how are they to learn or believe Roman 10:14-15

In the following pages you will read articles about innocent men who found themselves in prison sometimes for 30 years before they were exonerated. Many of these men later died within a year of being released from prison. During their incarceration surely these men needed the help from the Christian community. As you read their stories you will see surely they suffered beyond endurance. They needed comfort from someone. We believe the number of men in prison in this country who are living away from their families is a problem that must be solved by the community. Everyone needs to become involved in teaching these men to read and how to problem solve without resulting to violence. A high rate of recidivism does not benefit anyone except the owners of private prisons. Recidivism is link to the inability of men to read, to problem solve and to find employment once released from prison. Most of the men in prison are poor readers.

The men in prison are the link to our financial security. Our community has been devastated by the absence of these men from the home. These men are needed to build families and make our communities prosperous and safe. These men are parents who are needed by their children. They do not need to spend their entire life returning over and over again to prison. We realize some of you do not want to be bothered with these men. You want them to be punished and forgotten about. Well we cannot forget these men because if we do we will continue to attend more and more funerals. This is not the time to be ashamed nor is it the time to be hate filled. This is the time to act. We must act now to see that men released from prison can succeed. Our communities will never heal unless we confront the violence. Many people bristle at the mere mention of helping a prisoner. Yet these times require a higher behavior than anger or mere disdain. We must all help whomever we can because there but by the grace of God go I. June 17, 2015 nine people were shot to death at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina during a bible study meeting. This was a terrific act of violence in the holiest of place where people were assembled to learn about God yet the relatives of the victims forgave the shooter. November 27, 2015 Ke'Arre Stewart, 29, an Iraq veteran and a father of two, was shot and killed in a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colorado. His brother, Leyonte Chandler, told reporter he forgave the shooter. This was a tremendous act because Mr. Chandler spoke of his brother with such love and admiration. We need to act for one another even during the hardest of times. We have too many men wasting away in our nation's prison. **Together we can make a difference. Visit www.touchedbythelight.us and purchase a set of books for a prisoner –. You can place your order by mail rather than online**, Mail to PO Box 7267 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107. If you choose to purchase a set of books **for a particular prisoner**, we will need the prisoner's name, number and full address. Please include this information with your order. The men in prison are the fathers, sons, and brothers needed in our homes. We hope to restore men, restore families, and heal the wounds caused by violence.

After reading these articles we hope that you feel the same way we do that something must be done to relieve the suffering of women and children caused by the so many men living in prison. That relief will come by returning healthy men to the home. One way to accomplish this goal is to provide inspirational material to those who are lost. Light is brought into the world through reading. Caring for the old, the infirmed, the mentally and physically handicapped and the incarcerated is not only the work of the church it is the work of everyone. Even if you do not believe in a higher power you can still help because when a

man's mind is left in darkness man becomes a monster. The Wall Project was not designed to indoctrinate man to a specific ideology. The Wall Project was designed to provide guidance to lead man to a path of enlightenment and self-respect because when men learn to read they can do anything. They can learn how to fish and feed themselves all from reading. No one will have to teach a man to fish if he can read. On behalf of the staff at Touched By The Light Publishing we thank you for taking the time out of your day to read our material and to view our presentation.

Michigan Man Released From Prison After Judge Rules His Rights Were Violated

Posted: Mar 30, 2016 3:13 PM EST Updated: Apr 06, 2016 3:13 PM EST

By Jamie Valentine, Producer



A Michigan man is free, at least temporarily, after spending ten years behind bars.

Omar Pouncy was released from prison Monday after a federal judge reviewed his case and determined his constitutional rights were violated.

Ten years ago, Pouncy had to choose between what he says was an unprepared defense attorney and representing himself at trial on charges of armed robbery and carjacking.

Pouncy was 18 when he chose to defend himself.

The Genesee County prosecutor's office will appeal. Man freed from prison after 26 years sues

24 Hour News 8 web staff Published: June 3, 2014, 4:49 pm Updated: June 3, 2014, 11:57 pm



David Gavitt is released from prison in June 2012 after 26 years behind bars. (Courtesy the University of Michigan Innocence Clinic) IONIA, Mich. (WOOD) — A man released from prison in 2012 is suing people who had a hand in putting and keeping him behind bars for 26 years for the murder of his wife and two children.

In 1986, a jury found David Gavitt guilty of setting the March 1985 fire at his Ionia home that killed his wife Angela, 26, and two children, 3-year-old Katrina and 11-month-old Tracy.

That conviction was overturned after the University of Michigan Innocence Clinic took up Gavitt's case and presented new evidence showing the arson science used to convict him in 1986 had since been proven wrong. Gavitt was released from prison in June 2012.



(Gavitt visits the grave of his wife and children after being released from prison. Courtesy the University of Michigan Innocence Clinic – June 2012)

“Being incarcerated for what they said I did doesn’t even come close to the hell of losing your wife and daughters. That is the ultimate hell that I’ve been through,” said Gavitt told 24 Hour News 8 in an August 2012 interview. “I thought there was no hope. I was going to die an innocent man in prison, I thought.”

Gavitt last week filed a federal lawsuit against the four Ionia County prosecutors that have served since 1986, several Ionia police officers, several Michigan State Police employees, and an MSP crime lab technician.

He alleges the defendants knew MSP labs saw “false positives” in testing for accelerants, yet that evidence was never introduced. A major factor leading to his conviction was testimony that gasoline was found at the scene.

Gavitt also claims many of the defendants met shortly after the fire and decided Gavitt was responsible, and never considered that the fire could be accidental.

Gavitt is asking for a jury trial and compensatory and punitive damages. The suit does not name a dollar amount.

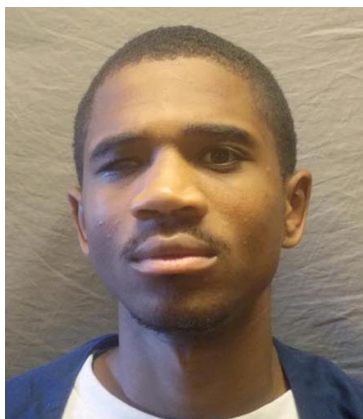
“It’s not fair that parolees and people maxing out get government assistance but exonerees get nothing,” Gavitt said in 2012. Court dates have not yet been set.

The Latest: Young Detroit man released from prison

Posted: Jun 08, 2016 3:38 PM EST Updated: Jun 08, 2016 3:38 PM EST



(AP Photo/Carlos Osorio, File). FILE - In this June 30, 2010 file photo, Davontae Sanford sits in a Detroit courtroom. On Tuesday, June 7, 2016, a judge ordered the release of Sanford, who is in prison after pleading guilty to killing four people at ag... (Michigan Department of Corrections via AP). CORRECTS YEAR OF WHEN PHOTO WAS TAKEN TO 2007 INSTEAD OF 2017 - This Aug. 7, 2007, photo provided by the Michigan Department of Corrections shows Davontae Sanford. A judge on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, ordered t...



DETROIT (AP) - The Latest on the release of a young Detroit man from prison after prosecutors agreed that his four murder convictions should be thrown out (all times local):

After eight years, a young Detroit man who entered prison as a 15-year-old is free. It comes a day after a judge threw out his convictions in four execution-style slayings.

Davontae Sanford didn't speak to a crowd of reporters Wednesday as he walked out of prison in western Michigan with a brother and lawyer Valerie Newman. His brother carried his belongings in a plastic sack.

Judge Brian Sullivan dismissed Sanford's four guilty pleas to second-degree murder at the request of prosecutors. A state police investigation found problems with how Detroit police obtained an alleged confession. Separately, a hit man in prison for eight killings says he committed the so-called Runyon Street murders in 2007. Sanford, who is blind in one eye, was 14 when the killings occurred and 15 when he pleaded guilty.

1:15 p.m.

The mother of a young man who is being released from prison after eight years says she feels "blessed" after the prosecutor agreed that convictions in four killings should be thrown out.

Davontae Sanford is scheduled to be released from a prison in western Michigan around 3 p.m. Wednesday, a day after a Detroit-area judge dismissed his 2008 second-degree murder convictions.

His mother, Taminko Sanford, says she'll probably have more to say Thursday.

At age 15, Sanford pleaded guilty to killing four people in a Detroit drug den. But a hit man has long said that police and prosecutors had the wrong guy.

Prosecutors said the convictions should be erased after reviewing a state police investigation of how Detroit police handled the case.

2 a.m.

A judge has ordered the release of a young Detroit man who is in prison after pleading guilty to killing four people at age 14, a crime for which a professional hit man later took responsibility.

The prosecutor's office agreed Davontae Sanford's second-degree murder conviction should be vacated after state police re-examined the case.

Judge Brian Sullivan tells The Associated Press he signed the order Tuesday and Sanford is expected to be released on bond.

Sanford, now 23, is in prison for the 2007 fatal shootings of four people at a Detroit drug den. He pleaded guilty at age 15. He's been trying to undo that plea for years, especially after hit man Vincent Smothers, confessed.

Smothers insists Sanford had no role.

Sanford's family says he confessed to please police.

Proposed law: Pay exonerated prisoners

Leon Hendrix Published: June 3, 2014, 11:11 pm Updated: June 3, 2014, 11:35 pm

LANSING, Mich. (WOOD) — A proposed law making its way through the state legislature would provide at least \$60,000 for every year a person is found to have been wrongfully imprisoned.

Senate Bill 98, known as the "Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation Act," aims to streamline the process of compensating prisoners who often end up hiring attorneys and suing municipalities.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Steven Bieda (D-Warren) has made it past the Senate Judiciary Committee. A version now awaits a vote of the full Senate.

It's not clear when or if Senate leadership will bring the bill up for a vote. If it passes the Senate, it will go to the House of Representatives for consideration and then the governor.

The proposed law would not help those who have already been awarded payouts equal to or greater than the amount the law would provide.

Larry Souter knows the struggle exonerated prisoners face.

He was sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison after being convicted of murdering a 19-year-old woman. The federal court of appeals overturned his conviction amid allegations that police withheld readily available evidence and testimony that would have proved Souter's innocence. He was freed in 2005.

Souter received a settlement, but would not disclose to 24 Hour News 8 how much money he was awarded. Senate Bill 98 would not help him, but he knows what it would mean to others who have gone through the same experience he did.

"I do honestly feel that when somebody walks up out of there, out of a place where they shouldn't be to begin with, I think they should be compensated with something," Souter said. "It is a struggle when you walk up out of there."

Souter's attorney is a former federal prosecutor. He says the bill is a 'no-brainer.'

"I am very much in favor of people who are truly, actually innocent getting something," John Smietanka said, adding that he doesn't think exonerated criminals should be forced to fight to win lawsuits. "It's something that we owe them."

"That's not coddling to give them something to get their lives going again," he added.

A fiscal analyst reports that 34 people in Michigan have been exonerated since 1989.

After four years in prison for arson, exonerated Michigan man sues sheriff's deputies, state police



By [John Agar | jagar@mlive.com](mailto:jagar@mlive.com)

on April 16, 2014 at 6:23 AM, updated April 16, 2014 at 12:00 PM

Victor Caminata, shown in a state Department of Corrections photo. Provided | Department of Corrections
GRAND RAPIDS, MI – A Cadillac man who spent four years in prison before he was cleared of arson has filed a federal lawsuit against Wexford County, three sheriff's deputies and a state police trooper.

Victor Caminata, 40, was sentenced to nine to 40 years in prison for burning down his girlfriend's house in Boon Township, east of Cadillac, where he was living in 2008. Michigan Innocence Clinic hired arson investigators, who found police analysis of the fire's cause to be flawed. The Innocence Clinic determined that the cause of the fire was accidental from an improperly-installed wood stove



Caminata's attorneys argued that police withheld evidence from the fire scene that "contradicted" the police theory of the fire's origin.

At a July 2, 2013, hearing, the prosecution determined that Caminata's conviction should be vacated. A judge ordered a new trial and released Caminata on bond. Six months later, the prosecution, after further investigation, dropped the charge. Caminata, who had been stabbed and beaten while in prison, was a free man.

"I'm glad this is over with ... glad my name has been cleared for me," [he said in a story](#) published by the University of Michigan Law School, which is a partner in the Innocence Clinic.

Caminata filed the lawsuit against Wexford County, sergeants Brian Rood and Trent Taylor, Deputy Chad Sprik and state police Sgt. Michael Jenkinson, a fire investigator. The fire broke out just before noon at the home of Caminata's then-girlfriend,

Nicole Vanderhoef. He noticed smoke coming from the wall surrounding the chimney in the living room. Her son also noticed smoke. Caminata immediately ran downstairs and used a fire extinguisher on the wood-burning stove, the lawsuit said. He ran outside, used a ladder to get on the roof, and dropped a fire retardant into the chimney. He then called 911.

Despite his attempts to stop the fire, the blaze spread and caused the roof to collapse, eventually destroying the house. Sheriff's detectives investigated the stove, chimney and wood surrounding it. Rood noted a thimble hole, about 6 inches in diameter, was uncovered. Investigators later learned the hole had once been used to vent an old stove on the first floor. Authorities later asked the state police to assist with the investigation.

"Jenkinson purportedly ruled out the chimney thimble hole being the origin of the fire based on his reconstruction of wood boards covering the thimble hole, concluding that the boards would have burned and been consumed if the fire originated at the thimble hole," Caminata's attorney, Wolfgang Mueller, wrote in the lawsuit. "Since his reconstruction of the boards showed an unburned wood board over the thimble hole opening, he concluded that the fire could not have originated at that location." Jenkinson concluded that "this is not a chimney fire as reported by the occupant. Human involvement cannot be eliminated at this time," the lawsuit said.

After Jenkinson's inspection, state police received an anonymous tip that Caminata had bragged that as a former firefighter, he could burn down a house without getting caught. Jenkinson returned to the house for further investigation. During the inspection, he found "two small pockets of deep charring" in the basement's ceiling floor joists. He said the two pockets were not connected to heavy burning on the insides of the joists, despite the holes going through the wood. "These deep, isolated pockets of burning certainly have the appearance and are consistent with a heavy, direct flame source having been applied, similar to that of a propane torch," Jenkinson wrote in his report.

The lawsuit claims Jenkinson improperly repositioned wood boards, leaving the impression that a board had covered the thimble hole when no board had covered it. Jenkinson's finding that wood covered the thimble hole was contradicted by photos Rood took soon after the fire, the lawsuit contends.

“From March 2, 2008, and continuing through the completion of the trial resulting in plaintiff’s arson conviction on May 14, 2009, neither Rood nor Taylor ever disclosed to the prosecutor that Rood’s photographs of the wood board’s on the chimney’s west side contradicted Jenkinson’s reconstruction of the wood boards, and that Rood’s observation of the exposed thimble hole contradicted Jenkinson’s conclusion of a wood board covering the thimble hole during the fire, though such evidence was in both of their hands.”

The withheld evidence prevented the defense from impeaching conclusions of the “prosecution’s star expert witness, Jenkinson,” Mueller wrote.

On July 2, 2013, the Innocence Clinic, having filed a motion to vacate the verdict and order a new trial, met with attorneys representing the state and experts on both sides, including Jenkinson. Attorneys and experts reviewed Rood’s photographs of the thimble hole “that had purportedly just been discovered the night before,” along with his statements that the thimble hole was uncovered and that Jenkinson’s reconstruction was wrong, the lawsuit said. “In agreeing to a new trial, the state prosecutor stated on the record that the newly discovered photographs had caused the state’s experts, including Jenkinson, to conclude that the fire should have properly been classified as ‘undetermined,’ and that ‘actual prejudice’ had occurred. The prosecutor further stated that, based upon the newly discovered evidence, ‘there would be a reasonable likelihood of acquittal,’” the lawsuit said.

The state dropped all charges.

Caminata has had trouble before. He earlier pleaded guilty in Osceola County to two charges of fraudulent use of building contractor funds, and pleaded no contest to larceny by conversion, records showed. Gregory Grant, attorney for Wexford County and the deputies, declined to comment. In court documents, he said that the defendants have governmental immunity and qualified immunity, which protects them while on duty from civil liability if the conduct does not violate laws or constitutional rights. He said the deputies “acted in good faith and acted in a reasonable manner.” “Caminata’s claims are barred by his own negligence or criminal conduct,” Grant wrote.

Assistant Attorney General John Fedynsky said Jenkinson has immunity. He and Grant both denied many of the allegations contained in the lawsuit.

John Agar covers crime for MLive/Grand Rapids Press *E-mail John Agar:*

DNA clears man in woman's rape, killing; release coming after 17 years in prison

September 05, 2014 at 8:55 PM, updated September 06, 2014 at 12:34 AM

KALKASKA COUNTY, MI – A man who spent more than 17 years in prison in the rape and killing of a 68-year-old woman will be released on Monday after DNA tests showed he wasn’t the attacker.

“Let me make this crystal clear. Jamie Lee Peterson is absolutely 100 percent innocent of this crime,” one of his attorneys, Caitlin Plummer, said Friday, Sept. 5.

Plummer, a member of Michigan Innocence Clinic, is among attorneys and law-school students involved in wrongful-conviction clinics at the University of Michigan and Northwestern University.

The Kalkaska County prosecutor plans to drop charges on Monday, Peterson's attorneys said. A judge earlier found “clear and convincing” evidence that Peterson would not be convicted if retried with the new DNA evidence available.

In a statement issued by Northwestern's Center on Wrongful Convictions, Plummer said Peterson "had no involvement. He knows nothing about it. The tragedy of this heinous crime was compounded by the wrongful conviction of an innocent man."

Peterson, a Davison resident, was convicted after he provided false confessions four months after Geraldine Montgomery was raped and killed in her Kalkaska home. Testing excluded Peterson as the source of DNA found on the victim's body, but prosecutors argued at trial that DNA found on the victim's shirt collar, which couldn't be tested, was likely his.

Tests now show that all of the DNA samples came from Jason Ryan, who was arrested last fall and awaits trial, Northwestern's statement said. State police found no credible evidence the two men knew each other.

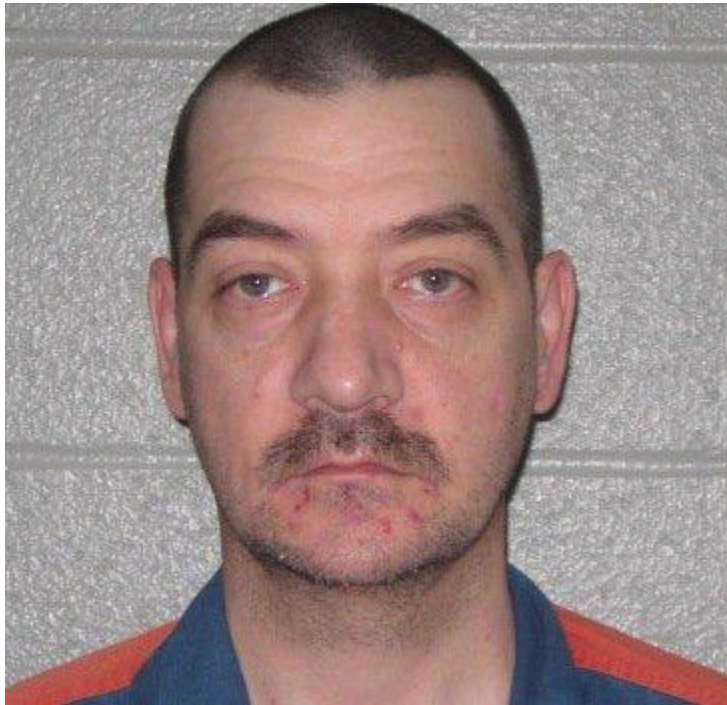
The wrongful-conviction groups say false confessions are not uncommon, particularly among the "young and cognitively impaired."

David Moran, director of the Michigan Innocence Clinic, said police "agencies need to ensure that their officers get training not just on how to interrogate, but on how to identify and prevent false confessions."

State Department of Corrections records say Peterson was discharged on Aug. 19.

Suspect's arrest in 1996 killing should free man in prison, innocence projects say

December 03, 2013 at 5:18 PM, updated December 04, 2013 at 10:40 AM



Jamie Peterson

KALKASKA COUNTY, MI – Two innocence projects that pushed for DNA testing in the 1996 rape and killing of a Kalkaska woman said evidence shows that a man serving a life sentence was not involved in the crime.

State police on Tuesday, Dec. 3, announced the arrest of **Jason Anthony Ryan, 35, of Davison**, in the **October 1996 killing of 68-year-old Geraldine Montgomery**. She was found in the trunk of her car with the engine running. Two years after the killing, Jamie Peterson, 39, was convicted of first-degree murder and two first-degree criminal-sexual conduct charges.

Recent testing of DNA evidence allegedly linked Ryan to the crimes. None of the DNA evidence belonged to Peterson. When the crime occurred, DNA technology

was primitive, and could not identify the source of semen and saliva found on the victim's shirt. The prosecution argued that it likely belonged to Peterson.

Now, the Michigan Innocence Clinic and Center on Wrongful Convictions plan to file legal motions before Christmas seeking Peterson's release and a new trial. "This new evidence proves that Jamie Peterson is absolutely innocent, he was never in that house, committed no crimes, and has no idea who did," Caitlin Plummer, one of Peterson's new attorneys, said in a statement.

Innocence projects from the University of Michigan Law School and Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago spent hundreds of hours researching the case. "This new evidence proves that Jamie Peterson is absolutely innocent, he was never in that house, committed no crimes." - Attorney Caitlin Plummer, **They concluded that Peterson had been wrongly convicted.**

The organizations said that four months after the killing, Peterson provided a "series of wildly inconsistent and inaccurate statements to police, Mr. Peterson confessed to the rape and murder. However, after DNA testing on the rape kit conclusively excluded Mr. Peterson as the donor, the police decided that there must have been two perpetrators. ... Mr. Peterson was convicted on the theory that he committed the crime with an unknown co-conspirator and that Mr. Peterson was likely responsible for the stain on the shirt."

In the spring, Peterson's former attorney, Al Millstein, 92, asked Michigan Innocence Clinic co-director David Moran to take a look at the case. The previous Kalkaska prosecutor had "rebuffed" efforts to use new DNA technology on crime-scene evidence, Peterson's advocates said. Moran said it was "indisputable" that Peterson did not rape the victim. The testing allegedly showed Ryan was the source of semen found on the rape kit and victim's shirt.

"We solicited the assistance of the Center on Wrongful Convictions and met with the new prosecutor in Kalkaska, who consulted with the Michigan State Police. We were very pleased when the new prosecutor immediately agreed with us that further DNA testing was of utmost importance," Moran said.

Advocates for Peterson said that he and Ryan have never been connected, but Ryan was linked to a now-deceased man who was the first prime suspect in the case. UpNorthLive.com reported that Ryan was [arraigned](#) on charges of open murder, felony murder and first-degree criminal-sexual conduct. Bond was set at \$2 million. Police say Ryan lived in the Davison area, but was in Kalkaska around the time of the killing.

Kwame Ajamu, 57

Formerly known as Ronnie Bridgeman



3rd man exonerated in 1975 Cleveland slaying

3rd man exonerated in 1975 Cleveland slaying

CLEVELAND - Having just exonerated Kwame Ajamu, Judge Pamela Barker stepped down from the bench on Tuesday, leaned across the defense table and gave him a hug. **It had taken nearly 40 years, but Ajamu was no longer a convicted murderer.**

Moments earlier, Barker had dismissed his charges and county Prosecutor Tim McGinty had conveyed a message through an assistant that Ajamu; his brother, Wiley Bridgeman; and their friend Ricky Jackson "have been the victims of a terrible injustice."

The three had been convicted and sentenced to death in the slaying of a businessman outside on a corner store on a warm spring day in 1975. The case against them unraveled last year when the prosecution's star witness recanted his testimony.

The witness, Eddie Vernon, was 12 when Harry Franks was killed and 13 when he testified against the three men at their trials in 1975. Vernon said in court last month and in an affidavit that he had been coerced by Cleveland police. Ajamu, then known as Ronnie Bridgeman, was 17 when he was sent to death row. Jackson was 19, and Wiley Bridgeman was 20. Their death sentences were later commuted to life terms.

Ajamu was released from prison in 2003. Jackson and Wiley Bridgeman had been imprisoned until recently and were freed Nov. 21.



WEWSMcGinty's office had said little about the dismissals. But on Tuesday, he absolved all three of their crimes and said he would not oppose any claims of innocence, which will speed the civil process by which the men are compensated for having been wrongfully incarcerated.

The prosecutor's concession seemed to astonish longtime Cleveland civil rights and defense attorney Terry Gilbert, who represents Ajamu and Wiley Bridgeman.

"To recognize an injustice ... it gives me faith and hope in this criminal justice system that good things can come out of it from time to time," Gilbert told Barker.

Ajamu, 57, has rebuilt his life. He is married to a woman he met in downtown Cleveland in 2003 when she couldn't find the right bus and he rode with her to her destination. They married the next year after she proposed to him. Ajamu called Lashawn Ajamu his best friend and greatest supporter.

After Barker dismissed the charges, Kwame Ajamu told the handful of people in the courtroom that he was overjoyed and that "this room is lit with the truth."

"It's my hope going forward that we don't have to wait another 40 years for the next Kwame Ajamu, Wiley Bridgeman, Ricky Jackson," he said. "It's my hope from this day on we can stop ignoring what is obvious in the criminal justice system and move forward with peace and love."

After the hearing, Ajamu credited Kyle Swenson, a writer for Scene Magazine, who in 2011 dug into the men's stories and exposed how justice had been subverted.

Ajamu said he hoped one day to meet with Eddie Vernon, who is now 52, so he can tell him he understands what happened and has no ill will toward him. Ajamu said his full exoneration finally makes him feel free to go anywhere he wants, anytime he'd like.

"I can even go back to being Ronnie Bridgeman, but I'm not," he said. "They killed Ronnie Bridgeman. They killed his spirit. They killed everything he believed in, everything he ever wanted. I wanted to be something, too. I could have been a lawyer possibly. I could have been Barack Obama. Who knows?"

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Glenn Ford

Exonerated Man Denied Restitution After 30 Years On Death Row

Glenn Ford was freed last year after serving 30 years on Louisiana's death row for a crime he didn't commit. If that wasn't bad enough, he was denied cancer treatment for a condition that later became terminal while he was locked up, reports the [Huffington Post](#). **March 27, 2015**

Now, in a final bit of indignation, the 65-year-old man will not receive state-mandated compensation for the time he spent on death row, a judge ruled Friday, because he allegedly knew about plans for the robbery that led to the killing and didn't stop it, the report says.

The [Huffington Post](#) reports:

*Caddo Parish District Judge **Katherine Dorroh** on Friday denied Ford compensation, saying that while Ford did not commit the murder that led to his wrongful imprisonment, he was "proven to be guilty of lesser crimes and was not an innocent man." The judge said Ford knew about plans for the robbery that led to the killing and didn't stop it. Further, he attempted to destroy evidence by pawning items taken in the robbery and tried to find buyers for the murder weapon used by men Ford implicated in the murder.*

Ford's attorney Gary Clements plans to appeal the decision, he said in a statement:

We are disappointed with the court's decision today denying Glenn Ford compensation for the 30 years he spent on death row for a crime the State of Louisiana agrees he did not commit. In its denial, the court adopted the State's argument opposing compensation. The ruling inflated the fact that Mr. Ford knew the people who committed the crime and insinuated that Mr. Ford was more involved in the crime than the facts in the record indicate. This is the latest in a series of great injustices that Mr. Ford has suffered over the last 30 years.

Ford was convicted in the 1984 death of **Isadore Rozeman**, a 56-year-old Shreveport jeweler and watchmaker, the report says.

After “credible evidence” surfaced corroborating Ford’s story that he was not part of Rozeman’s murder, Caddo County prosecutors asked that Ford’s conviction be vacated and [he walked free in March 2014](#).

It’s unclear if Clements’ efforts to appeal will work, but former prosecutor A.M. Stroud III published an open letter apologizing to Ford for the role he played in his conviction, adding that the 65-year-old man “deserves every penny owed to him under the compensation statute.”

‘It was fundamentally unfair.’ A prosecutor apologizes for his role in putting an innocent man on death row

Post Nation By Mark Berman March 21, 2015 Marty Stroud was 33 years old when he fought to have Glenn Ford sentenced to death. Stroud was relatively new in his role as assistant district attorney in Caddo Parish, La., when Ford was indicted on a charge of first-degree murder for the 1983 killing of a watchmaker who ran a jewelry store in Shreveport. “The case took about a week and a half,” Stroud recalls now. Ford, a black man before an all-white jury, was convicted and sentenced in 1984. He remained on death row for three decades. It was the first and only death sentence Stroud won as a prosecutor. Last year, Ford was declared a free man and [released from prison](#). His attorneys said upon his release he was sentenced due to [questionable testimony](#) as well as inexperienced defense. The lawyers he had during his initial trial had not tried a case before a jury before, Stroud said



Other men had also initially been charged in the shooting of Isadore Rozeman, the watchmaker, but those charges [were later dismissed](#). In 2013, Ford’s attorneys say they were told that a confidential informant for the Caddo Parish Sheriff’s Office pointed to one of those other men as the person who killed Rozeman, though precise details remain unclear.

In March 2014, after [prosecutors](#) and Ford’s attorneys [filed motions to vacate his conviction](#), the state district court ordered his release. However, more than a year later, Ford is still fighting the state for compensation. He’s also facing an advanced cancer diagnosis.

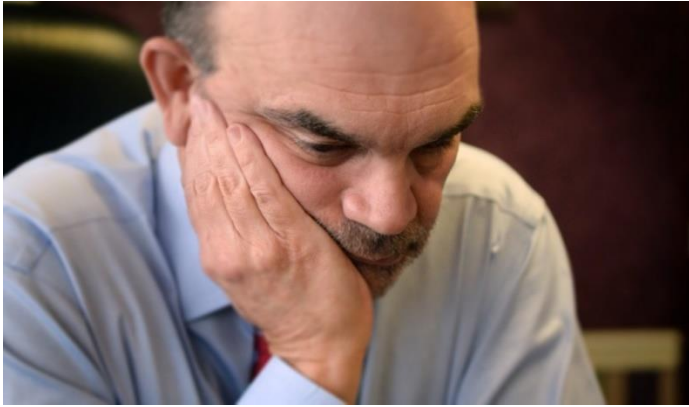
Stroud knows all of this. He says he knows now that Ford was innocent and he knows Ford’s trial “was fundamentally unfair.” He

knows Ford is dying, and he knows the state is not paying Ford for the decades he lost.

“When he was exonerated last year, I was thrilled,” Stroud, 63, said in a telephone interview Friday. “I thought that justice had been done.”

A.M. “Marty” Stroud III, who grew up in Shreveport and is an attorney there, read about Ford’s problems getting the state to pay him in [the Shreveport Times](#). Stroud could not believe it, so he began working on a letter to the editor of the newspaper to try and put his thoughts together. All of the things that had bothered him about the case and all of the things about the case that had built over the sleepless nights, poured out into the letter.

"I'm not one to write letters or get on soapboxes or anything like that," Stroud said. "But I felt that in this particular case, I had a unique view of what had happened since I actually was there and had watched the progress through the system all these years." "Marty" Stroud III, a former prosecutor and lead attorney in the Glenn Ford case, in his Shreveport, La. office on March 19, 2015. Stroud now says he feels remorse for his role in putting an innocent man behind bars for so long. (Douglas Collier/The Times) The result, which totals more than 1,500 words, was published online Friday by [the Shreveport Times](#) and widely circulated on social media. In the bracing letter, Stroud apologized for his role in taking away 30 years of Ford's life. He says he was "arrogant, judgmental, narcissistic and very full of



myself." Stroud explained why he had turned against the death penalty he so eagerly sought in 1984, and he expressed both his remorse for what he did and his apology to Ford for what cannot be undone.

"I was not as interested in justice as I was in winning," he wrote. Stroud recalled that late in the trial, while arguing for the death sentence, he mocked Ford for wanting to stay alive to try and prove his innocence, adding: "I continued by saying this should be an affront to each of you jurors, for he showed no remorse, only contempt for your verdict."

Stroud continued:

How totally wrong was I.

I speak only for me and no one else.

I apologize to Glenn Ford for all the misery I have caused him and his family.

I apologize to the family of Mr. Rozeman for giving them the false hope of some closure.

I apologize to the members of the jury for not having all of the story that should have been disclosed to them.

I apologize to the court in not having been more diligent in my duty to ensure that proper disclosures of any exculpatory evidence had been provided to the defense.

Stroud went on to work for a private firm after leaving the district attorney's office in 1989. He has worked on a mix of civil and criminal cases, including mounting defenses in death-penalty cases. Stroud said that he was told not long before Ford was freed that investigators working on a cold case talked to someone about the Rozeman killing, and that person said that Ford did not shoot the man. Stroud said he was told: "If the prosecution had known this at the time, there wasn't enough to have Mr. Ford arrested, much less give him the death penalty." Ford was subsequently released.

"I have a stain because I participated in the proceeding that, looking back on, it was fundamentally unfair," Stroud said in the interview. He said he knew that Ford's attorneys had not practiced criminal law and that he knew "it was a mismatch from the beginning."

Stroud also began seeing problems with a larger issue in the proceedings: The fact that Ford was not just found guilty, but found guilty and sentenced to death, which means he could have been executed before his innocence came to light.

The letter from Stroud seems rather remarkable, coming from a prosecutor who won a death sentence and wished later he could take it back. It also comes as prosecutors around the country are putting increasing resources into trying

to overturn false convictions. The country had [a record number of exonerations last year](#), a tally boosted by the efforts of prosecutors, according to the National Registry of Exonerations.

Mistaken convictions are a particular concern when they involve death sentences. Six of the people exonerated last year had been sentenced to death, the registry said. Wrongly executing someone is [“the ultimate nightmare.”](#) Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said recently. But Holder, who opposes the death penalty, called this an “inevitable” feature of the current capital punishment system, which relies on the judgment of people who can make mistakes.

Ford was the 144th death row inmate cleared since 1973, and he had spent more time on death row than any of these other inmates, the Death Penalty Information Center reported. (An Ohio man who spent four decades in prison, the longest-serving inmate later exonerated in the country’s history, [was awarded \\$1 million in compensation](#) this week by a state court; he had been sentenced to death, but it was commuted to a life sentence.)

Stroud’s unease with the death penalty has grown and deepened over the years, and he says Ford’s case illustrates why he now opposes capital punishment.\

“This case shows why the death penalty is just an abomination,” he said. “The system failed Mr. Ford, and I was part of the system. That is why I feel it was my duty to come forward and say: At the time, I was gung ho, got the right guy, no doubt whatsoever, on a crusade, I’m a good guy, I’m on a crusade for law enforcement. I never considered that the evidence, that there was something else out there we should’ve looked at.”



Glenn Ford talks to the media while leaving prison last year. (WAFB-TV 9/AP)

Stroud was confident in his case then, but he wishes now he had done more to look into the rumors that other people were involved in the crime. In hindsight, he realizes he was an eager prosecutor less than a decade out of law school, one who wanted to make a name for himself. Stroud saw other people who were touting their careers, boasting how they were going to become judges, bragging about the number of capital cases prosecuted and death sentences won. He recalls how after Ford was sentenced, he went out for drinks to celebrate, something he now looks back on with disgust.

“Looking back 30 years ago, I was just blinded by the prospect of prosecuting a first-degree murder case and obtaining a sentence of death,” he said. “I thought that would show that I was a tough prosecutor. What it showed is how easy it is to be caught up in the system and not to step back and see that a fair process is being used.”

Stroud said after being on both sides of the issue, he has determined that it does not work. “All it is is state-assisted revenge,” he said, adding: “We can’t do it. It’s arbitrary, it’s capricious. And I believe that it’s barbaric.”



Ford the day he left prison. (WAFB-TV 9/AP)

In Louisiana, the wrongfully imprisoned can receive [up to \\$250,000](#) in compensation. Ford is trying to get the state to pay him for the years spent in prison, but [court documents](#) show that the state says he should not be given money because he went to a pawn shop [to sell items](#) that had been stolen from Rozeman’s store. Attorneys for Ford said last year that one of the other men initially charged in the killing had given him jewelry to pawn. Ford [has also filed lawsuits](#) claiming he was wrongfully imprisoned and that he was denied necessary medical care after signs emerged he may have cancer.



Within months of his release from [the notorious Angola Prison](#) last year, Ford was diagnosed with stage-three lung cancer; he currently has stage-four lung cancer, according to [legal filings](#) submitted in federal court this month.

While Stroud has not talked to Ford, whom he calls "Mr. Ford," he said he has talked with an attorney for Ford, who suggested the former prosecutor write a letter to the exonerated man.

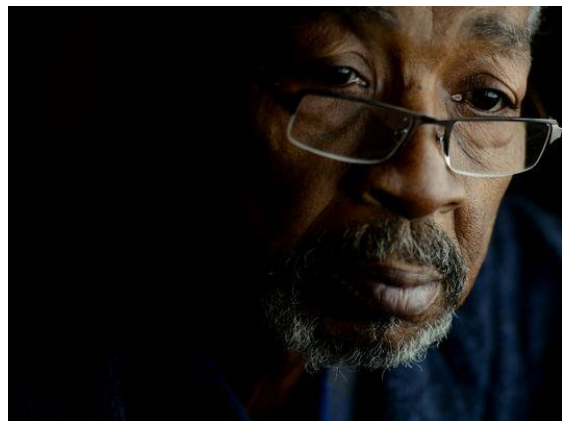
"When I started writing the letter, it was part of a cleansing process for me, stuff that had bothered me for years that I couldn't put my finger on," Stroud said. "It came out in this letter. The only regret that I have is that I didn't come to this position much earlier in life."

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Even though he hoped the letter would prompt some discussion about the death penalty, he said he is still surprised by the reaction it has received beyond Shreveport. "I knew it would probably stir some people up around here, but I never realized it would gain so much attention with other folks in other parts of the country," Stroud said. He has been called by CNN and other outlets who want to hear more about the story. "I'm a little bit stunned by that."

Stroud said he is not sure if he will write again to Ford. In his letter, Stroud calls for Ford to be given "every penny" called for by Louisiana's law governing compensation for the wrongfully convicted. He also says he hopes for compassion he does not believe he has earned.

"I end with the hope that providence will have more mercy for me than I showed Glenn Ford," he wrote. "But, I am also sobered by the realization that I certainly am not deserving of it."



Glenn Ford, exonerated death row inmate, dies

Alexandria Burris, The (Shreveport, La.) Times 7:36 p.m. EDT **June 29, 2015**

"I'm going to do what it takes to live," said Glenn Ford. Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times SHREVEPORT, La. — Glenn Ford, who was exonerated last year after [spending nearly 30 years of his life on death row for a crime he did not commit](#), died of lung cancer Monday, the Innocence Project New Orleans announced. He was 65.

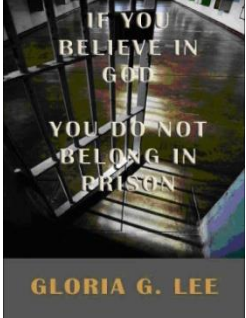
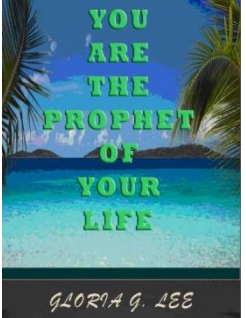
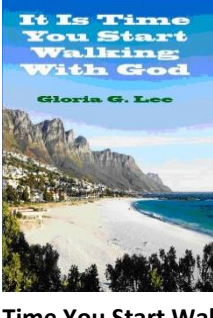
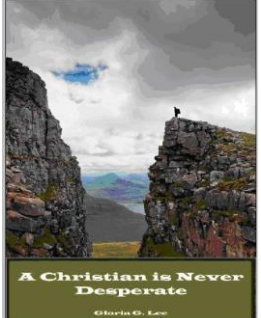
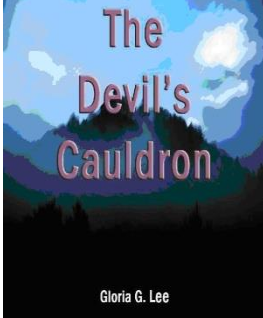
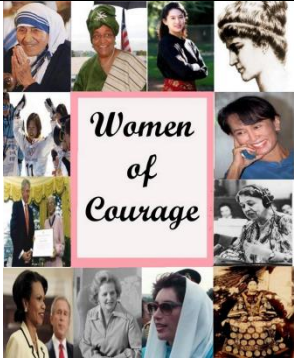
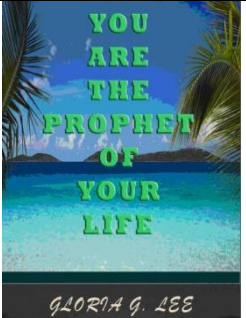
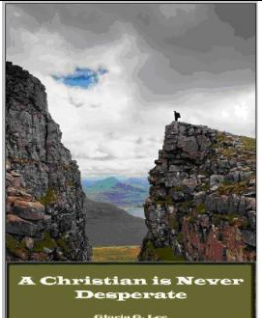
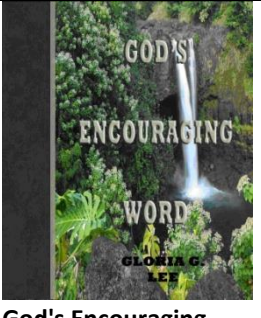
According to a news release, Ford died surrounded by friends and family at 2:11 a.m. CT in New Orleans. Ford's wrongful conviction would reignite national discussion about the death penalty after Shreveport Attorney A.M. "Marty" Stroud III, the lead prosecutor in Ford's trial, penned a letter apologizing for his role in Ford's conviction. Stroud also would call for the abolition of the death penalty. "In 1984, I was 33 years old. I was arrogant, judgmental, narcissistic and very full of myself. I was not as interested in justice as I was in winning," Stroud wrote in a letter that would go viral. The two would later meet face-to-face. In 1984, Ford was convicted of and sentenced to die for the Nov. 5, 1983, death of Shreveport jeweler Isadore Rozeman. Rozeman had been robbed and killed in his Stoner Hill shop.

Ford was 33 at the time of his conviction. Glenn Ford, 65, talks about his release from death row during an interview with The Times on Feb. 27 in his New Orleans home. (Photo: Henrietta Wildsmith/The Times) According to the Innocence Project New Orleans, Ford spent 29 years, three months and five days of his life in solitary confinement on death row at Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola. On March 10, 2014, Ford was exonerated. He had been the longest-serving death row inmate in the United States at the time of his release. The state of Louisiana gave him \$20 for a bus ride home from prison but has denied him further compensation under the state's wrongful conviction compensation statute, the Innocence Project New Orleans said. **And not long after his release, Ford was diagnosed**

with lung cancer. Ford was born Oct. 22, 1949, in Shreveport. He was raised by a grandmother in California and would later return to Shreveport. According to a news release, several of Ford's grandchildren, who live in California, were able to visit him. A memorial will be held later at Charbonnet Funeral Home in New Orleans, the Innocence Project New Orleans said.

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Matthew 25:31-40 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory.....He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me Give us a read - email us for more information yithril11@netzero.net

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