

A PROJECT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA IRVINE NEWKIRK CENTER FOR SCIENCE & SOCIETY,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL & MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW

The National Registry
of
EXONERATIONS

CURRENTLY 2,021 EXONERATIONS
MORE THAN 17,610 YEARS LOST

USING THE REGISTRY ISSUES RESOURCES ABOUT US MAKE A GIFT

LARRY YOUNGBLOOD

Other Arizona Cases



Larry Youngblood was convicted in 1985 of child molestation, sexual assault, and kidnapping. He was sentenced to ten years and six months in prison. In October 1983, a ten year old boy was abducted from a carnival in Pima County, Arizona, and molested and sodomized repeatedly for over an hour by a middle aged man. The victim was taken to a hospital, where the staff collected semen samples from his rectum as well as the clothing he was wearing at

the time of the assault.

Based on the boy's description of the assailant as a man with one disfigured eye, Youngblood was charged with the crime. He maintained his innocence at trial, but the jury convicted him, based largely on the eyewitness identification of the victim. No serological tests were conducted before trial, as the police improperly stored the evidence and it had degraded. Expert witnesses at trial stated that, had the evidence been stored correctly, test results might have demonstrated conclusively Youngblood's innocence.

Larry Youngblood appealed his conviction, claiming the destruction of potentially exculpatory evidence violated his due process rights, and the Arizona Court of Appeals set aside his conviction. He was released from prison, three years into his sentence, but in 1988, the Supreme Court reversed the lower court's ruling, and his conviction was reinstated (Arizona v. Youngblood, 488 U.S. 51). Youngblood remained free as the case made its way through the Arizona appellate court system a second time, but returned to prison in 1993, when the Arizona Supreme Court reinstated his conviction.

In 1998, Youngblood was released on parole, but was sent back to prison in 1999 for failing to register his new address, as required by Arizona sex offender laws. In 2000, upon request from his attorneys, the police department tested the degraded evidence using new, sophisticated DNA technology. Those results exonerated Youngblood, and he was released from prison in August 2000. The district attorney's office dismissed the charges against Larry Youngblood that year.

Shortly thereafter, the DNA profile from the evidence was entered into the national convicted offender databases. In early 2001, officials got a hit, matching the profile of Walter Cruise, who is blind in one eye and currently serving time in Texas on unrelated charges. In August 2002, Cruise was convicted of the crime and sentenced to twenty-four years in prison.

Summary courtesy of the Innocence Project, <http://www.innocenceproject.org/>. Reproduced with permission.

Report an error or add more information about this case.

Posting Date: Before June 2012

State:	Arizona
County:	Pima
Most Serious Crime:	Child Sex Abuse
Additional Convictions:	Kidnapping
Reported Crime Date:	1983
Convicted:	1985
Exonerated:	2000
Sentence:	10 years and 6 months
Race:	Black
Sex:	Male
Age at the date of crime:	30
Contributing Factors:	Mistaken Witness ID
Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?:	Yes

ABOUT THE REGISTRY

The National Registry of Exonerations is a project of the Newkirk Center for Science & Society at University of California Irvine, the University of Michigan Law School and Michigan State University College of Law. It was founded in 2012 in conjunction with the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law. The Registry provides detailed information about every known exoneration in the United States since 1989—cases in which a person was wrongly convicted of a crime and later cleared of all the charges based on new evidence of innocence.

CONTACT US

We welcome new information from any source about exonerations already on our list and about cases not in the Registry that might be exonerations.

Tell us about an exoneration that we may have missed

Correct an error or add information about an exoneration on our list

Other information about the Registry

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