

[Sign In](#)

A Joint Project of Michigan Law & Northwestern Law



Currently **1,067 Exonerations**

-
- [Browse Cases»](#)
 - [Summary View](#)
 - [Detailed View](#)
 - [Featured Exonerations](#)
 - [Recently Added](#)
- [Contact Us»](#)
- [Learn More](#)
- [Links](#)
- [News](#)

James Newsome

On October 30, 1979, an African American man shot and killed Edward "Mickey" Cohen, the white owner of a grocery store on the south side of Chicago.

The next day, on the north side of Chicago, officers John McCabe and Raymond McNally stopped James Newsome for questioning about an armed robbery. The officers quickly satisfied themselves that Newsome had not committed the armed robbery, but they thought he resembled a composite sketch of the man who murdered Cohen. Newsome actually was taller and several years younger than the killer described by three witnesses to the Cohen murder. Two of the witnesses, moreover, already had identified a different suspect from a mug book.

Newsome nonetheless was put into a lineup, from which all three witnesses identified him. Before his 1980 trial, it was determined that canned goods the killer had handled at Cohen's store bore fingerprints of an unknown person other than Newsome. Although the all-white Cook County jury knew of this, they still found Newsome guilty, and Judge Richard Petrarca sentenced him to life in prison.

In 1989, with the help of University of Chicago Law Professor Norval Morris, Newsome obtained a court order requiring the Chicago Police Department to run unidentified fingerprints from the murder scene through the relatively new Automated Fingerprint Identification

System. After the check was run, the officer in charge falsely reported that the search found no match. Five years later, however, the police belatedly admitted that the prints belonged to Dennis Emerson, who by then was on death row for another murder. The prosecution dismissed the charges against Newsome and he was freed. Governor Jim Edgar granted him a pardon based on innocence in 1995.

Newsome brought a federal civil rights suit, which was tried in federal court in 2001. One of the eyewitnesses to the Cohen murder was by then dead and another could not be located, but the third, Anthony Rounds, testified that he had identified Newsome at his trial only because the police had threatened him with jail if he did not. He said that when he went to the police lineup, he was told by the officers: "Pick No. 3," the position occupied by Newsome. The jury awarded Newsome \$15 million — \$1 million for each year he languished behind bars.

— *Center on Wrongful Convictions*

[Report an error or add more information about this case.](#)

Exoneration News

[More News...](#)

Contact Us

We welcome new information from any source about the exonérations that are already on our list and about new cases that might be exonérations. And we will be happy to respond to inquiries about the Registry.

- [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](#)



State:	Illinois
County:	Cook
Most Serious Crime:	Murder
Additional Convictions:	Robbery, Other Violent Felony
Reported Crime Date:	1979
Convicted:	1980
Exonerated:	1995
Sentence:	Life
Race:	Black
Sex:	Male
Age:	24
Contributing Factors:	Mistaken Witness ID, Perjury or False Accusation, Official Misconduct
Did DNA evidence contribute to the exoneration?:	No

About the Registry

The National Registry of Exonerations is a joint project of the University of the Michigan Law School and the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University School of Law.

Follow Us:  

Copyright 2012. All rights reserved.



Center on Wrongful Convictions

[Center on Wrongful Convictions](#) > [Meet the Exonerated](#) > James Newsome

Meet the Exonerated

[America's First Wrongful Murder Conviction Case](#)[America's First DNA Death Row Exoneration](#)[Exonerations in All States](#)[All Illinois Exonerations](#)[Exonerations in Illinois Capital Cases](#)[United States \(Federal\)](#)[Explore the Issues](#)[Women's Project](#)[About Us](#)[Contribute to Change](#)[Request Assistance](#)[Resources](#)[News and Events](#)[Case Update](#)[Bluhm Home](#)[Northwestern Law Home](#)[Center on Wrongful Convictions Northwestern](#)

JAMES NEWSOME

Police deceit and erroneous ID testimony led to 15 years of wrongful imprisonment

James Newsome at Northwestern University School of Law in February 2003. (Photo: Jennifer Linzer)

In 1979, two Chicago Police officers, with guns drawn, stopped James Newsome near Wrigley Field and took him to the Town Hall district station for questioning about an armed robbery. The police satisfied themselves that he had nothing to do with that crime, but one officer thought he resembled a composite sketch of a suspect in a murder case.

Although Newsome was taller and several years younger than the suspect and had a mole not shown in the composite sketch, and although two eyewitnesses had picked photographs of someone else out of a mug book, police put Newsome into a lineup. He was then informed that he had been identified.

Newsome was tried and convicted of the murder and armed robbery and sentenced to life in prison in 1980 based on testimony of three eyewitnesses, including the two who previously had identified other persons' photographs.

In 1989, with the help of University of Chicago Law Professor Norval Morris, Newsome obtained a court order requiring the Chicago Police Department to run unidentified fingerprints from the murder scene through the Automated Fingerprint Identification System. The check was run, and the officer in charge reported — falsely — that the search found no prints matching anyone else. It was not until five years later that police belatedly admitted that in fact prints had been found to match those of Dennis Emerson, who by now was on death row from another murder.

University School
of Law
375 East Chicago
Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
60611

Phone: (312) 503
-2391
Fax: (312) 503-
8977

On that basis, Newsome was freed in 1994 and Governor Jim Edgar granted him a pardon based on innocence the following year.

Case data:

Jurisdiction: Cook County, Illinois

Date of crime: October 30, 1979

Date of arrest: October 31, 1979

Convicted of: Murder, armed robbery, armed violence

Prior adult felony record: None

Trial judge: Richard Petrarca

Lead prosecutor: William

O'Connor (assisted by William Lippner)

Defense counsel (type): Privately retained

Sentence: Life

Release date: December 6, 1994 (on electronic home monitoring until January 5, 1995)

Months wrongfully incarcerated: 182

Date of birth: January 2, 1955

Age at time of arrest: 24

Gender: Male

Race: African American

No. of victims: 1

Age(s) of victim(s): 72

Gender of victim(s): Male

Race of victim(s): Caucasian

Known factors leading to wrongful conviction: Erroneous eyewitness identification, police misconduct (prompting of witnesses during lineup)

Did an appellate court ever affirm conviction? Yes — *People v. Newsome*, 110 Ill. App. 3d 1043 (1982)

Exonerated by: Fingerprint analysis

Mandated compensation for wrongful imprisonment: Yes

Date awarded: November 21, 1997

Months lapsed from exoneration to compensation: 34 months

Civil damage award: Pending

Defendants in civil action: John McCabe, Raymond McNally and City of Chicago

Date awarded: Pending

Months lapsed exoneration to award: Pending

The foregoing summary was prepared by Rob Warden, executive director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. It may be reprinted, quoted, or posted on other web sites with appropriate attribution.





Phone: (312) 503-2391 E-mail: cwc@law.northwestern.edu
[World Wide Web Disclaimer](#) and [University Policy Statements](#) © 2006
Northwestern University



VOLUME 73 NOVEMBER 2012 NUMBER 8

www.specialagentsassn.org

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2012

Mike Ditka's Restaurant
Route 83 & 22nd Street (NW corner)
Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois
****Lombardi & Landry Rooms****

\$45 per person
Cocktails at 6 p.m. (Cash Bar)
Dinner Served at 7 p.m.
Free Parking: Upper & Lower Garage Levels

Join Us for a Double Header
PAST PRESIDENTS' NIGHT

&

THE FRED L. HUNTER ROAST
Join Us As We Bid
A Fond Farewell To
A Phenomenal Special Agent

Greetings:

I wish to thank John Lynn and Bob Mance for their stellar job on Armed Forces Night. Bob was a natural at the mic and I'm sure everyone felt as proud as I was to be in the same room with him as he spoke. To look around and see the many faces that helped shape the history of the United States was a humbling experience to say the least. Listening to guys such as Joe DuCanto talk about Iwo Jima and John Lynn about his experience as a helicopter door gunner in Viet Nam decades ago, the stories became alive as only an experienced combat veteran could tell. Our guests seemed to enjoy the evening even when we put Sailors and Marines at the same table, they got along!

Let's not leave Memorial Day, and Armed Forces Night the only dates to remember the men and women of the Armed Forces. We should thank them on the street, airport, or wherever you may see someone in uniform and never forget the sacrifices they have made for you and I to live in this great Nation. I would also like to remember a dear friend and supporter of the Special Agents Association, Bobby Hatoff who passed away last month. He too was a Veteran of the U.S. Army Special Forces. You will be missed and thank you. As always, be safe.

-David A. Eshoo

SPEAKER BIO**A Fond Farewell for a Phenomenal Special Agent****FRED L. HUNTER****“45 Years of True Dedication”**

Fred L. Hunter is a forensic interviewer, detection of deception examiner, lecturer, and consultant. Mr. Hunter is currently President of F.L. Hunter & Associates Inc., a private Polygraph laboratory which includes a division involving the Municipal Registry's PSAT assessment. Mr. Hunter has conducted or supervised over 40,000 interviews, interrogations, and examinations since 1965.

He is the author of numerous articles and papers on interviewing, selection, and detection of deception issues. He is a member of the American Polygraph Association, Illinois Polygraph Society, and Special Agents Association. Mr. Hunter has lectured on numerous occasions for law enforcement, governmental, and business groups. Mr. Hunter has lectured on Polygraph and interviewing techniques to students majoring in law, criminal justice, psychology, and security education programs at over 30 university or college institutions. He has also given lectures to numerous high school, professional, social groups, and law enforcement agencies; including the FBI.

Mr. Hunter has been involved in the investigation of mysterious disappearances of funds and records from the banking industry for over 35 years. From 1978 to 1988, he was involved in more than 200 polygraph investigations in the banking industry. Many of these investigations were in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, including the FBI. Since the passage of the Employee Polygraph Protection Act of 1988, the number of bank investigations has decreased, however he still is involved in about 5 bank / financial loss investigations per year.

Mr. Hunter has also been involved in the selection and background evaluations of new employees in the banking industry for over 40 years. These background reviews involved polygraph examinations and integrity interviews as well as skills and attitudinal assessments.

Mr. Hunter has been involved in the training of management as well as security personnel through seminars regarding the investigation of mysterious disappearances, selection, and interviewing topics.

It should be noted that Mr. Hunter currently does polygraph screening examinations for about 50 separate law enforcement or fire service agencies (municipal and county). He also regularly conducts criminal investigation and internal affairs examinations for law enforcement agencies. Mr. Hunter also regularly conducts polygraph evaluations for a variety of defense lawyers in conjunction with investigations regarding their clients involving civil, state, and federal issues.

In 2006, Mr. Hunter was involved in the polygraph evaluation of about 10 subjects (all with separate legal counsels) in conjunction with a stipulation of the test results being accepted by the US Attorney's Office, Northern Illinois District, as part of a sentencing agreement in their trials.

FRED HUNTER (CONTINUED)

Mr. Hunter was involved in polygraph testing evaluations of James Newsome, Joseph Burrows, and Steven Linscott for their defense lawyers. His polygraph evaluations, which supported their denials in committing the crimes for which they were convicted, played a part in their individual defense lawyer's efforts to gain their freedom. All three were eventually released by the State of Illinois in the 1990's after being wrongfully incarcerated for a number of years.

Mr. Hunter has been involved in the therapeutic/counseling polygraph evaluation of clients battling addiction issues (alcohol, drugs, gambling, and sexual conduct) for psychologists specializing in such treatments for over 20 years. This specialized testing involves creating valid sexual history assessments as well as monitoring and performing maintenance type evaluations during their recovery.

AND LET'S NOT FORGET ELLEN

Fred's wife, Ellen, has been an "Honorary" Special Agent for many years, and we sincerely appreciated her attendance and input at General Monthly Meetings. Ellen's contributions over the years have been greatly appreciated by Officers and the membership. Fred and Ellen will be sorely missed and we invite them back any time they are in Chicago.

God bless you both in your "full retirement" – which we know will be very active!

Special Agents 2012 Charitable Donation

Every year the Board of Directors deliberates regarding the availability of funds to make charitable donations. The Board first considers how well our annual golf outing performed, in terms of net proceeds, and then it considers the overall financial position of our organization. This year, the Board determined that we are in a position to make a charitable donation in the amount of \$1,000.

The Board then evaluated various national and local charitable organizations, based on analysis of the most recent tax returns available for each organization (tax returns of exempt organizations are subject to public disclosure).

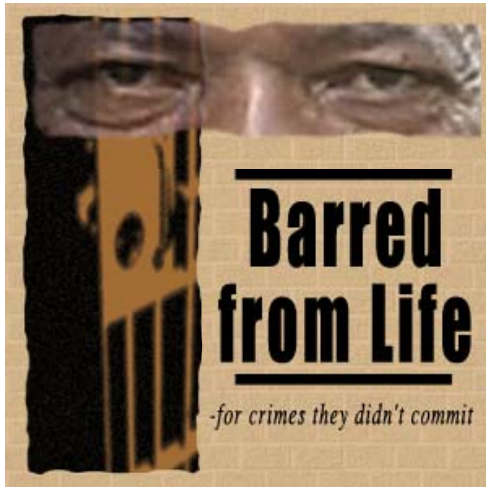
This year Board decided to make a single donation to a local charitable organization:

\$1,000 – Danny Did Foundation

This organization holds as its main goal the advancing of awareness of epilepsy and of Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP) and enhancing the SUDEP communication model between medical professionals and those afflicted by seizures. The foundation was formed by Mike & Mariann Stanton after their four year old son Danny was a victim of SUDEP in 2009. Mike Stanton is an Evanston police officer and former Cook County investigator.

<http://caught.net/cases/hornoff.htm>

In October 2001, James Newsome of Illinois was awarded \$15 million—\$1 million for each of the 15 years he served in prison for a wrongful murder conviction.



[Quicktime Clip \(Broadband\)](#)
[Quicktime Clip \(Modem\)](#)

[RealPlayer Clip \(Broadband\)](#)
[RealPlayer Clip \(Modem\)](#)

James Newsome

In 1979, James Newsome was stopped by Chicago police and questioned about a robbery. Although police quickly realized he had nothing to do with the robbery, he was taken in because one of the officers thought he "resembled" a composite sketch of a suspect in a murder case. James Newsome did not match the description of the murder suspect who was described as shorter and several years older than James. James was placed in a line-up where he was identified by two witnesses, both of whom had earlier picked someone else's picture out of a mug book. James Newsome was tried and convicted of murder.

In 1989, Professor Norval Morris obtained a court order to have the Chicago Police Department run fingerprints that had been found at the murder scene. The officer charged to run the prints reported - falsely - that the testing did not result in a match. Five years later, police admitted they matched Dennis Emerson, a man on death row for another murder. James Newsome served 15 years in prison for a murder he didn't commit.

[History](#)
[\(News\)](#)

[Creators'](#)
[Statement](#)

[Artists'](#)
[Bios](#)

[Contributing](#)
[Exonerees](#)

[Northern California](#)
[Innocence Project](#)