

[Forensic Science Degree](#)[Menu](#)You are here: [Home](#) » [Blog](#) » [Forensic Science](#) » [Cleared By Forensics:](#)

- [Home](#) Innocent People Set Free By Science
- [About Us](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Degrees](#)

Cleared By Forensics: Innocent People Set Free By Science

April 30, 2016 by [Brooke Kaelin](#)

We've all heard the joke: everyone in prison is innocent. But what happens when they really are innocent? When there is a true miscarriage of justice and an innocent person goes to jail forensic science is often their best hope for release. If the evidence against them can be re-examined using modern forensic techniques it is often possible to overturn their conviction and set them free. Let's take a look at a few case samples where forensics has saved the day and helped an innocent person escape a punishment they did not earn.

Darryl Pinkins

This, plus the victim's testimony was enough to put him away. The only problem? He didn't commit the crime. Hair sample identification is unreliable at best – but in 1981 advanced DNA testing wasn't possible. Odom's was finally released on parole in 2003 though he was forced to list himself on the sex offender registry. In 2013 he was completely exonerated when DNA testing revealed he was not the one who committed the crime.

Cathy Woods



In 1976 a woman named Michelle Mitchell was murdered. When police found her body her hands had been bound together and her throat had been slit. The case was quickly picked up by local media. In 1979 a woman named Cathy Woods confessed to the crime. Woods had verified mental health problems but was able to give police specific details regarding the crime (details she had learned from case coverage in the media). She was subsequently sentenced to life in prison and was serving her time until 2013 when critical DNA evidence from the crime scene was tested and found to be from a man instead of a woman. Woods was not the one who committed the crime. She was released in 2014 and completely exonerated in 2015.

It's a frightening thing to imagine; that innocent people could go to jail. Unfortunately it happens a lot more often than it should. Thankfully, cases are being reviewed every day and DNA testing is far more accurate now than it was; allowing wrongfully convicted people to go free. In fact, more than 2,000 people have been exonerated in the last twenty years, largely based on advancements in forensic science. As you earn your forensic science degree never forget – forensics can catch the guilty but it can also free the innocent.

Posted in:

- [Forensic Science](#)

Tagged with:

- [DNA Evidence](#)
- [Forensic Science](#)
- [Wrongful Conviction](#)

See more

1. **Prev:** [Forensic Careers: Questioned Documents under the Microscope](#)
2. **Back:** [All Posts](#)
3. **Next:** [5 Free Digital Forensic Investigation Tools: Learn to Use Them and Make Your Resume Shine!](#)

Search Degrees