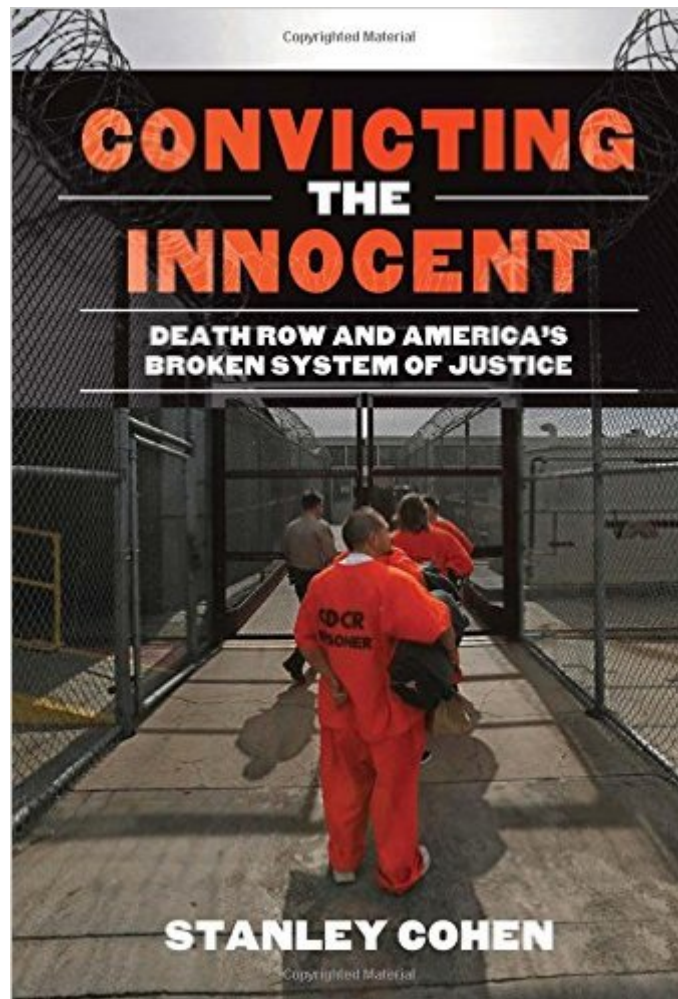


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# Convicting The Innocent: Death Row And America's Broken System Of Justice



## Synopsis

A landmark in the fight against the death penalty. Extensively researched and brilliantly written. • Martin Garbus, criminal defense attorney Every day, innocent men across America are thrown into prison, betrayed by a faulty justice system, and robbed of their lives—either by decades-long sentences or the death penalty itself. Injustice tarnishes our legal process from start to finish. From the racial discrimination and violence used by backwards law enforcement officers, to a prison culture that breeds inmate conflict, there is opportunity for error at every turn. Award-winning journalist Stanley Cohen chronicles over one hundred of these cases, from the 1973 case of the first ever death row exoneree, David Keaton, to multiple cases as of 2015 that resulted from the corrupt practices of NYPD Detective Louis Scarcella (with nearly seventy Brooklyn cases under review for wrongful conviction). In the wake of these unjust convictions, grassroots organizations, families, and pro bono lawyers have battled this rampant wrongdoing. Cohen reveals how eyewitness error, jailhouse snitch testimony, racism, junk science, prosecutorial misconduct, and incompetent counsel have populated America's prisons with the innocent. Readers embark on journeys with men who were arrested, convicted, sentenced to life in prison or death, dragged through the appeals system, and finally set free based on their actual innocence. Although these stories end with vindication, there are those that have ended with unjustified execution. Convicting the Innocent is sure to fuel controversy over a justice system that has delivered the ultimate punishment nearly one thousand times since 1976, though it cannot guarantee accurate convictions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Convicting the Innocent Stanley Cohen is a veteran award-winning newspaper and magazine journalist who has worked for over fifty years. He also taught journalism and philosophy at Hunter College, and writing at New York University. This 2016 book has 296 pages for its <sup>TM</sup> ^Contents, <sup>TM</sup> ^Introduction, <sup>TM</sup> ^Preface, six Parts, <sup>TM</sup> ^Afterword, <sup>TM</sup> ^Source Notes, and <sup>TM</sup> ^Index to cases. Cohen is opposed to the death penalty, so this is not an objective book. Certainly the innocent should not be executed, or even convicted. This book would be better if it examined the faults that led to the conviction of the innocent. Quoting Justice Scalia only shows the need for a mandatory retirement age of Supreme Court Justices at age seventy to prevent such senility (<sup>TM</sup> ^Introduction). If killing a guilty murderer is wrong should Ted Bundy or John Gacy have been spared? Wouldn't that be a perversion of justice? People are killed in traffic accidents, should all traffic be banned? Wrongful conviction is not new in America (<sup>TM</sup> ^Preface). Cohen references the Boorn Case. If the most compelling argument against the death penalty is that it is used on the innocent, then the most compelling argument for the death penalty is that is used mostly on the guilty (or convicted). Tom Mooney was found guilty of murders in spite of a photographic alibi; this was done for political or economic purposes. The Boorn Case is mentioned on pages 8-12. This book focuses on those who were freed from death row, or had served long prison terms. Virtually every case involved official misconduct of some kind (human error). The incentives to cheat or bend the rules in order to convict is built into the system. The <sup>TM</sup> ^Index of cases omits the state of New Jersey!

[book:Convicting the Innocent: Death Row and America's Broken System of Justice|29908499][author:Stanley Cohen|121045] I received this book for free through a Goodreads Giveaway. I can't say that I enjoyed this book because it actually made me angry every time I read some of it. I believe in the death penalty however I can't imagine anyone coming away from reading this book without feeling that our justice system needs a complete overhaul and the death penalty should be extremely rare and only in cases with overwhelming evidence. The whole book is basically summaries of cases of people who had been on death row and were exonerated after several years and sometimes decades. It wouldn't have upset me as much if most of them had been convicted on reasonable amounts of evidence and the occasional mistaken identity of an eyewitness who truly believed they had the right guy but that was not the case. Most of them were convicted on extremely questionable evidence and most of the cases involved police misconduct, prosecutorial misconduct and even judicial misconduct. In several of the cases it turned out the

suspects were beaten and tortured into confessing to crimes they didn't commit and eyewitnesses were coerced and coached into testifying against them by a group of detectives who had been operating that way for 2 decades in Chicago. Those same detectives had also been involved in murders and planting evidence and protecting organized crime bosses. In many cases I didn't see any evidence in the story that the corrupt officials who caused these meant to spend years on prison with the expectation that they were going to die for crimes they didn't commit were prosecuted. Some were but most just lost their jobs if even that.

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