

On October 27, 2010, Anthony Graves walked out of the Burlison County Jail after spending 18 years in prison, including 12 years on death row, as an innocent man. During his time on death row, he faced two execution dates. His case reflects egregious prosecutorial misconduct, perjury, and false accusation.

In 1992, police arrested Robert Carter for the horrific murders of six people, including four young children, in Somerville, Texas. Under pressure to name an accomplice, Carter confessed to the murders and implicated Graves, a man he barely knew. There was no physical evidence linking Graves to the crime, and no motive. Despite the fact that three alibi witnesses confirmed he was present in his mother's apartment at the time the crime took place, Graves was convicted and sentenced to death.



Carter, the sole witness against Graves, first recanted his testimony three days after his arrest. He continued to recant throughout his years on death row and even in his last words before his execution in 2000: **"It was me and me alone. Anthony Graves had nothing to do with it. I lied on him in court. Anthony Graves don't even know anything about it."**

Graves spent 12 years on death row before the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2006 that his conviction had been improperly obtained. The judges found that Burlison County District Attorney, Charles Sebesta, did not disclose all of Robert Carter's statements to the defense and had elicited false testimony from him.

Instead of dropping the charges, the Burlison County District Attorney's office held Graves in an isolated cell in the county jail for four years while it appointed a special prosecutor to retry the case. The county planned to seek another death sentences. After conducting her own extensive investigation, however, special prosecutor Kelly Siegler concluded that there wasn't a single shred of evidence to support Graves' conviction. At her urging, the county dropped all charges against him and released Graves on October 27, 2010.

Sadly, the case of Anthony Graves is only one example of the flawed Texas criminal justice system. According to the National Registry of Exonerations, over 240 people have been exonerated for serious crimes in Texas, including 13 from death row. Graves is among more than 150 individuals nationwide to be released from death row.

More than 20 years after Graves' conviction, the Texas State Bar revoked the law license of former Burleson County District Attorney Charles Sebesta, finding he had engaged in prosecutorial misconduct and "egregious" behavior during Graves' trial. Despite Sebesta's appeals, the Texas State Bar confirmed his disbarment on February 8, 2016.

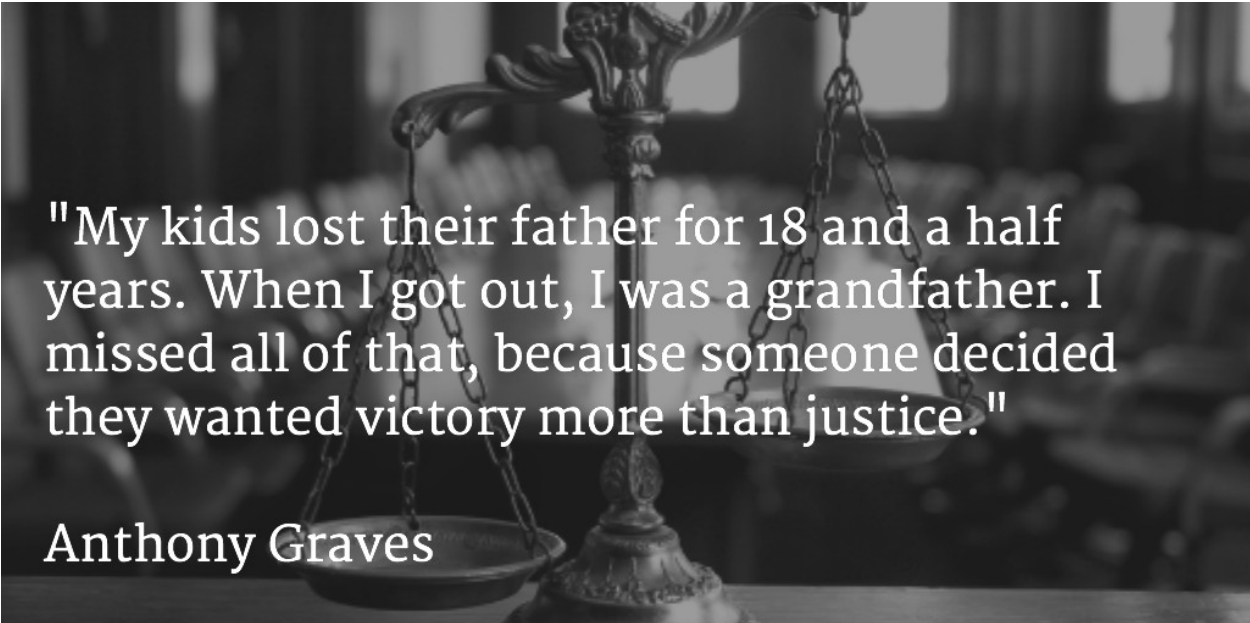
Since his exoneration, Graves has spoken about his experience with the Texas death penalty system to audiences throughout the United States and worldwide. He is the founder of the Anthony Graves Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to aiding children who are affected by the criminal justice system, and was recently appointed to the board of the Houston Forensic Science Commission.

Additional Resources

The Innocence Project was integral in securing legal assistance for Anthony Graves. For more information about their involvement and role in his exoneration, please visit <http://www.innocenceproject.org/news-events-exonerations/anthony-graves-and-the-long-struggle-to-freedom>.

Texas Monthly's Pamela Colloff began covering Anthony Graves' case in 2010. She diligently reported his journey from wrongfully convicted to exonerated. A complete list of her articles can be found at <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/innocence-lost/> and <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/innocence-found/>.

To learn more about the Anthony Graves Foundation, please visit <http://www.anthonygravesfoundation.org/take-action/>.



"My kids lost their father for 18 and a half years. When I got out, I was a grandfather. I missed all of that, because someone decided they wanted victory more than justice."

Anthony Graves