

Anthony Graves: Wrongfully Convicted.

Anthony Graves was accused of murdering six people, four of them children, in Somerville, Texas in 1992. He maintained his innocence since his arrest.

Under pressure to name an accomplice in the slaying of Bobbie Davis, her daughter, and her four grandchildren, Robert Carter (the father of one of the slain children), identified Graves, who he barely knew. Reporter Pamela Colloff documents in great detail in her article, "Innocence Lost" (October 2010, *Texas Monthly*) the ensuing events of how Graves was tried and ultimately sentenced to death along with Carter.



There was no physical evidence linking Graves to the crime, and no motive. The sole witness against him, Robert Carter - who confessed to and was executed for the murders in 2000 - re-canted his testimony against Graves three days after his arrest, and again and again through the years, including while strapped to the gurney in the death chamber.

The case of Anthony Graves is one more example of the flawed Texas criminal justice system. Faulty eyewitness identification techniques, lack of recorded interrogation by police officers, junk science, and the political pressure to "catch the killer", combined with substandard indigent defense, all led to his conviction despite the lack of any evidence linking him to the crime. In fact, Graves had three alibi witnesses who could confirm he was present in his mother's apartment at the time the crime took place.

In 2002, the Innocence Project became aware of Grave's case and worked with him to secure legal representation and petition for a fair trial where key evidence, such as a deposition from Carter confessing that he had lied about Grave's involvement in the case, could be considered.

Graves spent 12 years on death row until the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 2006 that his 1994 murder conviction was improperly obtained because the District Attorney did not disclose all of Robert Carter's statements to the defense and had elicited false statements from the witness.

The Burlison County District Attorney's office could have dropped all charges against Anthony Graves after the 5th Circuit ruling, but instead held him in a county jail for four years awaiting retrial. Burlison County planned to seek the death penalty again for Anthony Graves in February 2011, but stunningly dropped all charges and released Anthony Graves on October 27, 2010, declaring him innocent and wrongfully convicted after an extensive investigation.

On anthonygraves.org, Graves states he is inspired by the wisdom of people like Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr. When asked by reporter Pamela Colloff what sustained him through all of this, he replied: "Knowing that I am innocent. I am not going to lay down my life for something I didn't do."

Anthony Graves is the 12th person in Texas to be wrongfully convicted and removed from death row.

Read Pamela Colloff's article "Innocence Lost" in *Texas Monthly* at:

<http://www.texasmonthly.com/2010-10-01/feature2.php?1286046647#>



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