INNOCENCE AND EXONERATION

CALIFORNIA HAS EXECUTED 13 PEOPLE, AND EXONERATED 8, SINCE 1977.



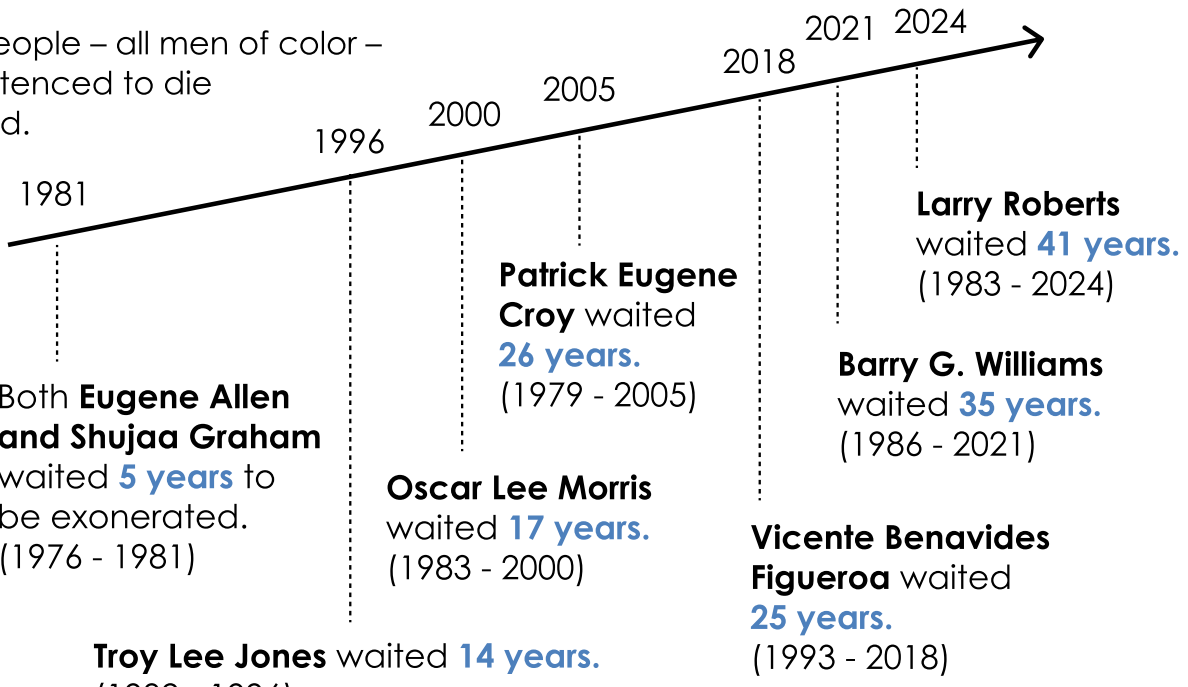
This means that **for every 3 people California has executed, it has exonerated 2.** In contrast, the national ratio is 8 people executed for each exoneration.

EXONEREES WAIT DECADES FOR RELIEF

To date, 8 innocent people – all men of color – who the State has sentenced to die have been exonerated.

The dearth of habeas counsel and the delay in appointments in California means that 70% of people sentenced to death await counsel.

This, in turn, means that still more claims of innocence have gone uninvestigated and unpresented, and **there are likely more innocent people currently sentenced to death in California.**



A 2014 study estimated that at least 4.1% of people sentenced to death should be exonerated. Based on this study, approximately

42 of 1,023 people sentenced to die since 1977 are **innocent**.

> "There are innocent people on death row. We don't think this, we know this."
>
> Governor Gavin Newsom (2019)

The information in this fact sheet comes from the 2025 Annual Report, updated 10/01/2026, and Death Penalty Information Center, and sources cited therein. The Habeas Corpus Resource Center (HCRC) was created to address the clear need for qualified attorneys to represent death-sentenced individuals in habeas corpus proceedings. More information about HCRC, and what we do, may be found on our public website: www.hcrc.ca.gov.