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Court of Criminal Appeals officially exonerates man in Dallas murder case

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The [Texas Court of Criminal Appeals](#) ruled Wednesday that a man convicted of a Dallas murder and an attempted murder is “actually innocent” of the crimes.

Richard Miles was released from prison in October 2009 and has been waiting since then for the court to officially clear him.

Miles said Wednesday that the ruling came just after he stopped checking the court’s decisions every week to see if his case was among them.

“It’s a great day,” said Miles, who reported for work as usual Wednesday at a Dallas hotel, where he serves food. “They said it would happen when I stopped looking.”

The Dallas County district attorney’s office had agreed he was wrongly convicted in 1995 for the May 1994 murder of Deandre Williams and attempted murder of another man. Miles had been sentenced to 40 years for the murder and 20 years for the attempted murder.

Dallas County District Attorney [Craig Watkins](#) said that he is happy for Miles and that the ruling is a good indicator for future cases without DNA evidence. “Fortunately, for Mr. Miles, his day has finally come. The court is starting to take seriously cases where there is no DNA.”

Watkins said [Dallas police](#) and the district attorney's office are close to filing charges against the person they believe committed the crimes.

Jim McCloskey of Centurion Ministries, a prisoner advocacy group that began investigating Miles' case in June 2008, said Miles' freedom is partially due to the prosecutors' willingness to look into the case.

"What an absolutely thrilling development," McCloskey said. "Now it's official, what the whole world knew: He is an actually innocent man."

While investigating the case, prosecutors and Centurion Ministries found that Dallas police withheld evidence from the defense and trial prosecutors about other suspects, including that a woman had called police to say her boyfriend was the killer.

Another problem with the case was that evidence at the trial of a small amount of gunshot residue on Miles' hands is no longer considered reliable. It could have been from other substances such as batteries, matches or dirt.

Also, a man who identified Miles at the trial as the killer has recently testified that he actually did not recognize Miles. He said he told the prosecutor and the prosecutor told him where the defendant would be sitting. The man went on to identify Miles during the trial. The appellate court did not address this issue in depth and called it a recantation of the identification.

The ruling of innocence means that Miles will be eligible for compensation from the state for his [wrongful conviction](#). The state currently pays \$80,000 per year for time spent behind bars plus a monthly stipend.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/local-news/20120215-court-of-criminal-appeals-officially-exonerates-man-in-dallas-murder-case.ece?action=reregister>