



# LEE EXONERATION SPURS REFORM

Earlier this spring, Centurion's efforts to exonerate Ralph Lee ended with powerful results that could impact wrongfully imprisoned individuals throughout the state. In addition to the charges against Mr. Lee and his co-defendant, Eric Kelley, being dismissed, the prosecution's handling of the case was so disturbing it could not be ignored, prompting Attorney General Gurbir Grewal to act decisively. He has appointed retired New Jersey Supreme Court Justice and recently retired Centurion Board member, Virginia Long, to lead a study to determine whether a [statewide conviction integrity unit](#) should be established to handle cases of incarcerated individuals who present significant evidence that they are innocent. Additionally, Grewal assigned his office to reinvestigate the Lee and Kelley case and appointed retired New Jersey Supreme Court Justice James Zazzali to conduct an independent review of the prosecution's handling of the Lee and Kelley case.

On April 6, 2018 charges arising from the July, 1993 robbery and stabbing murder of a store clerk in Paterson, New Jersey were dismissed against Ralph Lee and Eric Kelley, ending their 25-year fight to prove their innocence. The dismissal followed two and a half years of litigation by Centurion, representing Ralph Lee, and the New York Innocence Project, representing Eric Kelley, which resulted in an Order overturning the convictions and granting new trials for each man. During the hearings that led to the new trial orders, it was shown that DNA recovered from the hat left by the assailant at the bloody crime scene belonged to an individual who had committed a similar knife point robbery of a Paterson store clerk, and did not belong to either Ralph Lee or Eric Kelley. Other evidence presented established that the State suppressed exculpatory eyewitness testimony directly proving that neither Lee nor Kelley was involved in the crime. Further, the confessions of Lee and Kelley were false, not only on the DNA evidence, but also indisputable crime scene evidence presented showed that the murder and robbery could not possibly have occurred as stated in the alleged voluntary confessions of the men. (continued on next page)

## CENTURION

seeking freedom for the innocent in prison

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# Hope For David Bryant

David Bryant was just 19 years old when he was sent to prison for a 1973 Bronx murder he did not commit. When he eventually wrote to Centurion, it took staff a few years simply to get trial transcripts and meager police and forensic reports. When the record was finally compiled, it was clear David was not the perpetrator of the crime. We spent several more years looking for the physical evidence from the crime to have it DNA tested but failing that, David provided a saliva sample that Centurion had blood typed and the result meant that David was an innocent man and experts confirmed that belief.



In December 2013, a hearing was held in Bronx Supreme Court before Judge Seth Marvin and various witnesses offered testimony and in April 2013, Judge Marvin found for the defense. David was freed “forthwith” from his courtroom with no post release conditions. Because David had no family, he came to Princeton, initially living with Kate and Mark Germond, then briefly with Jim McCloskey and finally to the Robeson House on Witherspoon Street in Princeton. He had a job at Princeton Seminary and made many friends within the community and at church.

When the District Court of Appeals reversed Judge Marvin’s decision in 2014, the prosecution insisted David return to prison until his case was settled. In July 2014, David turned himself in, surrounded by some of Centurion’s staff and his attorneys who vowed to fight on. It was an awful day for all of us.

Finally, in August 2017, David was granted a new trial by Federal District Court Judge Robert Sweet. The Bronx District Attorney appealed and in May 2018 the Southern District Court of Appeals upheld Judge Sweet’s “thorough and well-reasoned analysis” as to why David deserved to have a new trial. The only court left for the prosecution to appeal to now is the US Supreme Court, and it is highly improbable they will hear this 42-year old case. Shortly, we will be asking for bail for David.

We are hoping David can live with Philadelphia exoneree Ed Baker. Ed, despite no prior criminal record, spent 26 years in prison for a 1973 murder he did not commit. He has been free for almost 20 years working as a union electrician for the city of Philadelphia. He owns his own home where David will have his own room and a mentor he can rely on to help him as he figures out the new world...again. Of course his Princeton and Centurion friends will be making regular treks to Philadelphia.

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## LEE EXONERATION SPURS REFORM (continued from front page)

Despite the DNA identification of the true assailant and the other overwhelming evidence of Ralph Lee and Eric Kelley’s innocence, the Passaic County Prosecutor’s Office blindly refused to re-investigate the case while at the same time going to extraordinary lengths to try and overturn the trial court’s new trial orders to keep Lee and Kelley imprisoned.

Thanks to Centurion’s work and the NJ Attorney General’s pursuant actions, the Ralph Lee and Eric Kelley cases have had the effect of putting each of the 21 County Prosecutors in the State of New Jersey on notice that their duty to do justice is paramount and that they will be held accountable by the Attorney General should they ignore evidence of a wrongful conviction.



Dear Friends:

*I was in my office one weekend and once I closed down my computer, I sat quietly and looked around. Really looked around at all the photos of family and friends. And as my eyes rested on certain photos, memories of that person and that time came flooding back. Sometimes they evoked a smile, other times a laugh, until I realized I also had tears streaming down my face. I have had the profound fortune to have so many extraordinary people in my life. How did I get so lucky? Too many of them have been lost to us; Joyce Brown, Gerry Conlon, Wayne Eastridge, Steve Toney - the list goes on and on. In the silence, it occurred to me that this is a holy place because of all these exceptional people who have touched me in such deeply felt ways. Smiling down at me, urging me on, to keep on keeping on. (Not that I really need much encouragement.)*

*And that brings me to you. Your support, while vital to our very existence and to the people you are helping us free from prison, also serves as an encouragement to all of us. The struggle to free someone from the clutches of the criminal justice system is really difficult work with more setbacks than victories. However, you authenticate our efforts with your gifts, and your support says to our clients, "You are so important I am going to give you my hard earned money to help secure your freedom." I am not sure if you realize this aspect of your giving. You are far more than simply a name attached to a dollar amount. It goes far deeper than that for us.*

*So thank you! We are grateful for your support and we look forward to a long, long journey together in this very worthy mission. Enjoy your summer - we'll keep you apprised of what we are up to in our quest to exonerate the wrongly convicted.*

Respectfully,

Kate Germond, Executive Director

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**DONATE ONLINE** ➡ **[centurionministries.org/donate/](https://centurionministries.org/donate/)**

Many companies will match your donation to Centurion.  
Check with your company to increase your gift!



# Kansas Passes Wrongful Conviction Compensation Law

Exonerated last fall of a 1994 double murder, Lamonte McIntyre has had a busy and productive several months.

After more than two decades of wrongful imprisonment, Lamonte is celebrating freedom, learning new trades--and for good measure--helping to reform the criminal justice system in his home state of Kansas.

With Lamonte standing by his side, Governor Jeff Colyer in May made Kansas the [33rd state to offer compensation](#) to innocent people who were incarcerated for crimes they didn't commit.

Kansas will now pay exonerates \$65,000 for each year of wrongful imprisonment.

Lamonte was also the inspiration behind a new Kansas law making it illegal for police officers to have sexual relations with people they stop for traffic violations or detain for questioning.

Lamonte's 23-year nightmare was triggered by the actions of a corrupt cop who solicited sexual acts from women in Kansas City and threatened to arrest them or their family members if they rejected his advances.

One of those women was Lamonte's mother.

Centurion began fighting to free Lamonte in 2009.

Everyone who has met Lamonte comes away moved by his story and his desire to make a difference in his life and community.

Impressed by his warmth, curiosity, and intellect, two administrators at a Kansas community college offered Lamonte a full scholarship after talking to him at an Urban League luncheon.

Lamonte, who is also attending barber school, plans on getting a business degree.

"It's always been a dream of mine," McIntyre told the Kansas City Star newspaper. "I started my college career in prison, so to be able to finish is great."

Keep on the great work, Lamonte!



**33 states have compensation plans for wrongfully convicted individuals**  
**Centurion has freed 61 men and women**  
**Only 19 have been given compensation**



## *2018 Autumn Auction & Dinner*

to honor Judy Scheide & in memory of Bill Scheide

Centurion is thrilled to honor Judy Scheide and remember Bill's commitment to justice and freeing the innocent. This year's theme is "Imagine." It is sure to be a night filled with hope and love.

Please contact [corey@centurion.org](mailto:corey@centurion.org) or call 609-921-0334 if you are interested in tickets.

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# Why I give

Each time I have the privilege of meeting a wrongfully convicted person, I am overwhelmed by the absence of bitterness and anger. These men and women spent years in prison, deprived of youth, family, and freedom. Each one seems determined to focus on the joy of being free and a new found gratitude for life. It is inspirational to witness their strength and courage and to be a part of the Centurion team.

As a volunteer and a supporter, I reap the comfort of knowing that the work, time, and money is dedicated to the sole purpose of giving back a life of freedom to the wrongfully imprisoned.

They are waiting with endless hope.

*Laura Sinderbrand*

Laura has been an active volunteer for over three years. You will find her busy in the Centurion office most Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Join us in welcoming **Corey Waldron** as our new Chief Development Officer and Deputy Executive Director! Corey will work with Centurion's staff, board, volunteers, and donors to grow support for our work, and build organizational capacity. She will also be mentored and trained to succeed Kate Germond as Centurion's Executive Director in the future. Corey has more than 15 years of experience working for non-profits in the Trenton and Princeton communities. She has served in a variety of roles including executive director, board member, program manager, and fundraiser at both local and national organizations with a wide range of missions including community development, education, domestic violence prevention, and disability services. For more information on Corey's background, visit [www.centurion.org](http://www.centurion.org).

## The Centurion Team is Growing!

Centurion is thrilled to welcome **Laila Wilson** as our new Office Administrator and Executive Assistant! Laila will provide administrative and fundraising support to the Centurion team – she's the friendly voice you'll hear when you call our office. Laila has more than 14 years of experience in various development and administrative operations roles and is skilled in donor relations, fundraising, and process management. Prior to joining Centurion's team, Laila was the Resource Development Manager at Isles, Inc., and the Development Director at the Waldorf School of Princeton. Before that, Laila spent over a decade overseeing the US, Puerto Rico, and Mexico fleet operations at C. R. Bard, Inc. and co-led the company's employee volunteer initiatives. To learn more about Laila, visit [www.centurion.org](http://www.centurion.org).



## NEW TV SERIES FEATURES CENTURION EXONEREES RICHARD MILES AND MARK SCHAND

Check [tvone.tv/show/evidence-of-innocence](http://tvone.tv/show/evidence-of-innocence) for viewing information





# .....CASE UPDATES.....

**Shawn Henning** is in his 30th year of wrongful incarceration. He recently had an unusual parole hearing. He had been sentenced to a term without the possibility of parole, but he was a juvenile when sentenced and under Connecticut's interpretation of the US Supreme Court decision of *Miller v. Alabama* he was entitled to a parole hearing. It was quite remarkable in that his attorney, Jim Cousins, had repeatedly been told Shawn would never get parole as long as he denied guilt. However, Jim and Lori Freedman put in countless days and hours to get a parole package and presentation together. Shawn spoke clearly and with emotion about his Dickensian childhood and the subsequent poor choices he made and he also let the panel know that in his 29 1/2 years he'd only had four write ups and they were in his first year and for stupid stuff (showering on the wrong day). He'd had no write ups in the past 28 years! Plus, he had taken every class he could possibly take. There were letters from guards about his good and helpful work ethic and behavior. There were 13 of us who made the trek to this 8:30 a.m. hearing in northern CT. The panel was impressed—so impressed they granted him parole for November of this year. Home in time for a Thanksgiving dinner.

**Michael Shannon** EXONERATED On February 11, 2018 Orleans Parish District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro dropped the case against Michael Shannon stating, "in the interest of justice, we felt this was the appropriate resolution to this case. It appears in all likelihood that this individual was not the person responsible for this homicide."

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**Centurion is currently developing 105 cases of innocence**



A jury found Ben Spencer guilty.

Centurion took on the case, won a new trial, and a judge found him innocent.

## **Is justice about the truth?**

Barbara Bradley Hagerty tells the story in *The Atlantic Magazine* and in a 3-part podcast on Radio Atlantic. If you liked *Serial*, you will love this!

***The Atlantic Magazine* . Jan/Feb 2018 issue - "No Way Out"**

***Radio Atlantic* . February . three part podcast . episodes 32,33,34 ... "No Way Out"**

"There's probably not a day that goes by that I don't at least think of Ben."

~Jim McCloskey

**HOPE . JUSTICE . FREEDOM**



Innocent men and women  
need our help

**YOUR DONATION BRINGS JUSTICE**

Together we are making the wrongs right.

Imagine losing your freedom... who would help?

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