

Antonio Williams conviction Overturned When The Victim Recants

Antonio Williams was released on August 23, 2011 after more than 4-1/2 years imprisonment for the rape of a child he didn't commit in Birmingham, Alabama. *The Birmingham News* published [a feature article](#) about Williams' case in its Sunday paper for October 23.

In 2003 a 7-year-old girl that Williams was acquainted with through his daughter was discovered to have a sexually transmitted disease. Two years later, in 2005, Williams was arrested when the girl said he was the man who raped her several times during the years 1999 to 2002, when the girl was between 3 and 6.

Williams was indicted and during his trial in April 2007 the only evidence against him was the girl's testimony. The jury convicted the 39-year-old Williams of two counts of child rape. The next month he was sentenced to life in prison and ordered to enter the prison's sex offender program.

The girl was 15 when on April 14, 2011 she was interviewed by the police about an unrelated issue. She told them Williams had never abused or raped her. She named another man as the person who actually com-



Antonio Williams in October 2011 (Tamika Moore, *Birmingham News*)

mitted the crimes, and that he had also abused her older half-sister. When the police interviewed her half-sister she corroborated that the man had abused her.

The Jefferson County DA reopened Williams case. Williams was appointed a lawyer who filed a motion for a new trial based on the new evidence of the girl's recantation corroborated by her half-sister. During a hearing held in May 2011 the girl repeatedly stated under oath that Williams never touched her and that she only named him as her rapist because the man who actually raped threatened to harm her if she ever told anyone what he did to her. She named the actual rapist. Her testimony was corroborated by the testimony of her half-sister, who named the same man as her abuser. It was also disclosed during the hearing that the girl told her stepmother that Williams did not abuse or rape her, but the stepmother did not tell that to the police or prosecutors. After the hearing the judge set aside Williams' convictions and ordered a new trial. The judge described some of the testimony allowed against Williams' during his trial as "appalling."

Jefferson County D.A. Brandon Falls decided not to retry Williams and when the charges were dismissed on August 23, 2011, Williams was released after 4 years 6 months and 26 days of wrongful incarceration.

DA Falls told *The Birmingham News* after Williams' release that the man who the girl testified was her rapist, and who her step-sister testified sexually abused her, will not be charged with those crimes unless additional evidence is discovered. [He said](#), "We would have to make sure we had extensive corroborating, independent evidence" in addition to the girl's testimony.

[Click here to read](#) *The Birmingham News'* article, "Birmingham man, wrongly convicted of rape, is now free and starting his life over." In response to the article's description of the difficulties Williams is having in starting his life over, several dozen people contacted the newspaper with [offers to help Williams](#) with clothing, furniture and some job possibilities.

Sources:

[Birmingham man, wrongly convicted of rape](#), is now free and starting his life over, *Birmingham News*, October 23, 2011

[Birmingham News readers come to aid](#) of man who lost everything after wrongly convicted of rape, staff writers, *Birmingham News*, October 24, 2011

Beach cont. from p. 17

The State appealed Judge Phillips ruling to the Montana Supreme Court. To prevail in their appeal the State will have to overcome the judge's detailed explanation of why he found the witnesses credible and why their new evidence supports a new trial for Beach.

In December 2011 [Beach was released](#) on his own recognizance after 29 years of imprisonment. In July 2012 Judge Phillips [lifted Beach's restrictions](#) and allowed him to live on his own unsupervised.

Barry Beach's website with extensive information about his case is, <http://montanansforjustice.com>.

Sources:

[Barry Allan Beach v. State of Montana](#), No. 1068-C, MT 15th Judicial Dist Roosevelt County, November 23, 2011 (Granting Barry Beach a new trial.)

[Judge: Witnesses credible in Barry Beach hearing](#), *Great Falls Tribune*, November 24, 2011

[Barry Beach freed on own recognizance](#) after 29 years behind bars, *Great Falls Gazette*, December 8, 2011

[Judge lifts housing restrictions on Barry Beach](#), *Billings Gazette*, July 12, 2012

Five Men Freed Because Prosecution Failed To Disclose Star Murder Witness Was Unreliable

Five men — Levi Walker, Adam Joof, Antonio Christie, Michael Osbourne and Owen Crooks — were freed when the UK's Court of Appeals [quashed their convictions](#) as unsafe on March 8, 2012, based on the prosecutions failure to disclose evidence their star witness was unreliable.

The five men were convicted in 2008 of the



Owen Crook, Levi Walker and Michael Osbourne (top row). Antonio Christie and Adam Joof (bottom row).

2002 murder of Kevin Nunes in Staffordshire -- 160 miles northeast of London. The prosecution claimed the 20-year-old Nunes was taken to a country lane where he was shot to death during a drug feud. Their convictions were based on the testimony of an alleged eyewitness. The men were sentenced to life in prison with minimum sentences of between 25 and 28 years before being eligible for early release.

After their convictions were affirmed on appeal the men applied to The Criminal Case Review Commission to review their case. The CCRC referred the case of the five men to the Court of Appeals after their investigation uncovered misconduct by police officers involved in the murder investigation for concealing material evidence, and the failure of the prosecution to disclose evidence that the eyewitness was not reliable.

The prosecution's case was so flawed after the disclosures that the Crown Prosecution Service [told the appeals court](#) that it did "not seek to uphold the convictions" and would not retry the men.

Five Men cont. on p. 19