

Qian Renfeng Awarded \$258,915 For 14 years Wrongful Imprisonment For Murder

Qian Renfeng [was awarded](#) \$258,915 on August 9, 2016 for being wrongly imprisoned in China's Yunnan Province for almost 14 years after being convicted of murdering a child.

In February 2002 Renfeng was 17-years-old, and working as a nurse at the Xing Rui Kindergarten in Qiaojia County in Yunnan province in Southwest China.

On February 22, 2002 three children in the school became ill and were hospitalized. One of the children who was two-years-old died, and the other two recovered.

The police learned that Renfeng was involved in a dispute with the school's principal



Qian Renfeng after her release on Dec. 21, 2015 (South China Morning Post)

pal and that she had prepared the children's food the day they became ill. They suspected the children may have been poisoned by Renfeng because of the dispute.

Renfeng insisted she was innocent.

However, after 12 hours of non-stop intensive police interrogation that included forcing Renfeng onto her knees for eight hours with her hands cuffed behind her back and repeatedly hitting her face with a black leather shoe, the police said she confessed to mixing rat poison in the food of the three children.

Renfeng was charged with murdering the child. Her trial in 2002 was held before an autopsy on the deceased child was completed.

During her trial Renfeng disputed the truthfulness of her confession, claiming she had not signed it, and that she had blurted out that she was guilty because she was suffering from severe fatigue and hours of torture.

The trial court rejected Renfeng's defense, and convicted her of murder based on her confession. On September 3, 2002 she was given the lenient sentence of life in prison because she was 17 at the time of the child's death. She was also ordered deprived of her political rights for life.

Renfeng's appeal was denied.

In 2010 a group of women lawyers visited the No. 2 Prison for Women in Yunnan Province to offer free legal advice. Renfeng made an impassioned plea of her innocence to lawyer Yang Zhu. An appeal was filed in her case based on insufficient evidence of her guilt. In August 2011 her appeal was rejected. The [appeal court ruled](#), "the details of the matter were clear, the accused has admitted to her crimes, the charge was correct and the sentence was appropriate."

In 2012 an online campaign advocating Renfeng's innocence went viral in China. Responding to the media attention, on May 30, 2013, the Yunnan Provincial Procuratorate began a post-conviction review of Renfeng's case.

Almost two years later, on May 4, 2015, the Procuratorate notified Renfeng that due to "facts are unclear and insufficient evidence" it would recommend her retrial to the Yunnan Provincial High Court.

The investigation discovered a number of irregularities in Renfeng's case, including that handwriting analysis showed the confession she purportedly signed had been faked by three police officers, and the deceased child didn't show toxic symptoms of rat poisoning.

On December 21, 2015 the Higher People's Court of Yunnan province acquitted Renfeng after her retrial, on the basis there was insufficient evidence to prove her guilt. The Court stated her confession had been coerced, and the prosecution's case had many contradictions and presented unreasonable explanations regarding the alleged poisoning.

Renfeng was immediately released after more than 13 years and 10 months in custody. [She told reporters](#) that her mother died in April 2015, and "My biggest regret is that I couldn't fulfil my filial responsibility towards my mother for even one day."



Qian Renfeng before her arrest in 2002 (Family photo)

In June 2016 Renfeng filed a compensation claim for up to 9.55 million yuan (about US\$1.45 million) in damages. On August 9, 2016 the Yunnan Provincial government awarded Renfeng compensation of 1.72 million yuan — the equivalent of US\$258,915.

Williams cont. from p. 5

"Footnote 2. "The process in which Williams found himself enmeshed was particularly troubling. After waiving his right to counsel and to a jury trial, Williams was at the mercy of the State, which showed no mercy. His attempts to comply with the instructions of the police officer, who then testified against him, were used by the State to win a conviction for a crime other than that with which he originally was charged, with the acquiescence if not the assistance of the trial court."

When asked about the ruling completely exonerating Williams, his attorney Elizabeth Rogan [told a reporter](#), "He was driving while black is what happened. He was a completely upstanding gentleman who got pulled over and his life got turned upside down."

[Click here to read](#) the Georgia Court of Appeals ruling in *Kevin Andre Williams v. The State of Georgia*, No. A15A1973 (GA Ct. of Appeals, 3-28-2016).

Sources: [Kevin Andre Williams v. The State of Georgia](#), No. A15A1973 (GA Ct. of Appeals, 3-28-2016) (Reversed conviction based on insufficient evidence of guilt of every essential element.)

[Court of Appeals](#): 'Justice Denied' in DeKalb County Traffic Court, *Daily Report*, April 1, 2016

[The Rogan Law Firm](#), Elizabeth Vila Rogan webpage



Qian Renfeng holds the judgment of innocence issued by the Yunnan Provincial Higher People's Court on December 21, 2015 (CFP)

Sources: [Moment teen nanny is cleared after serving 13 years of a life sentence for poisoning toddlers](#), *Daily Mail* (London, UK), December 22, 2015

[Nurse receives 1.72 million yuan for spending 14 years in prison on wrongful murder conviction](#), *Shanghaiist.com*, August 10, 2016