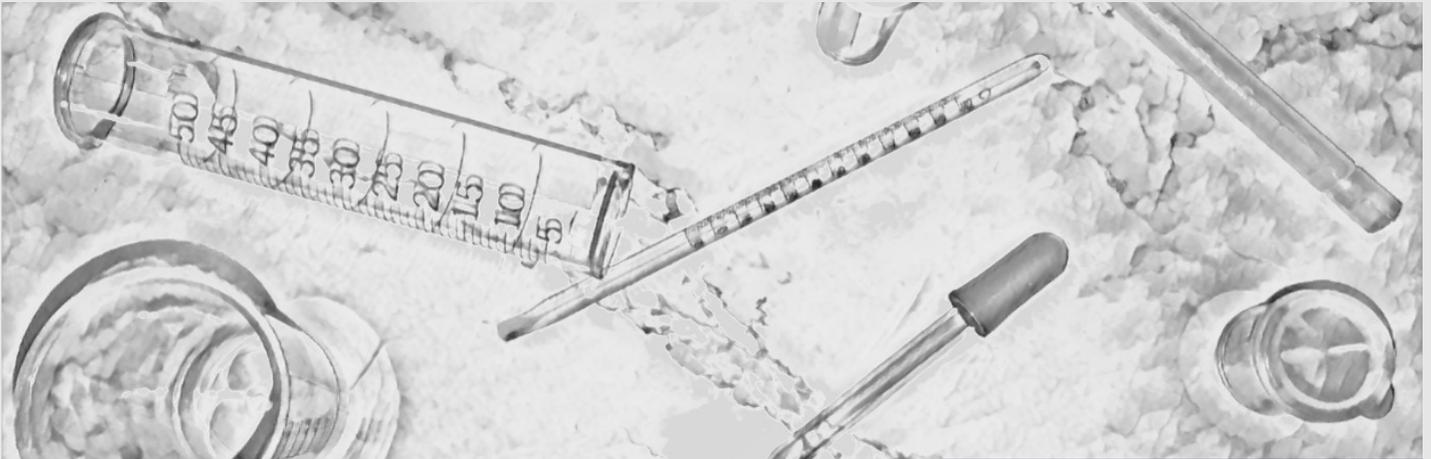


INTEGRITY

The Center for Integrity in Forensic Sciences Newsletter



Cases

BIG NEWS-We are very pleased that Clarence Jones was given a Writ of Actual Innocence in the state of Maryland.

Amicus Briefs

CIFS filed an amicus brief on behalf of Clarence Jones in February, 2021. Experts said that Clarence killed his infant son by shaking him. His son had many underlying health conditions and complications at birth that ultimately lead to his death. There was no crime; Clarence should never have been arrested, let alone convicted. The Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project worked tirelessly to free him. Clarence was convicted in 1999 and spent 18 years in prison before he was let out on parole. He had been out for four years when the courts overturned his conviction and remanded for proceedings.

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Every donation brings us that much closer to a fair legal system.

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Amicus Briefs

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In July a judge for the Circuit Court for Baltimore stated that "Granting a new trial in this case would not serve the interests of justice". This freed Clarence of the charges against him. The years lost are an incredible injustice. We truly hope Clarence can now begin to heal from the loss of his son.

Science in the News



Angel Bumpass with her two daughters.

In 2009, 68 year old Franklin Bonner was found in his home bound and suffocated to death with duct tape with his house ransacked. The case went cold for 9 years and then one day in 2018, detectives came to Angel's home serving a warrant for her arrest in the murder of Franklin Bonner. At the time of Franklin's murder, Angel was 13 years old.

Evidence against Angel consisted of two partial finger prints on the adhesive side of the duct tape. The duct tape used to kill Franklin also held 9 other fingerprints on it, from other individuals.

Mallory Vaughn was charged and tried with Angel after a federal inmate came forward, saying that Vaughn confessed to him about murdering Franklin Bonner. This informant posed to get a lesser sentence by providing this information. Vaughn and Angel did not know each other until this trial.

The jury came back after 4.5 hours and acquitted Vaughn and convicted Angel. Angel was sentenced to life plus 8 years.

Fingerprint analysis is not infallible but a subjective science that relies on personal analysis and opinions. We have seen far too many cases where finger prints were used and caused wrongful convictions. Much of the science behind fingerprint matching consists of a technician or examiner comparing prints of a suspects to those from a crime scene. Opinions, bias, and human error can get in the way, even if unintended.



People

Attorney and author Jarrett Adams joined CIFS as a board member in 2021. Jarrett was wrongfully convicted of a crime he did not commit at age 17 and sentenced to 28 years in a maximum security prison. After serving nearly 10 years and filing multiple appeals, Jarrett was exonerated with the assistance of the Wisconsin Innocence Project.

Jarrett used the injustice he endured as inspiration to become an advocate for the underserved and often uncounted. As a first step, Jarrett earned his Juris Doctorate from Loyola University Chicago School

of Law in May 2015 and started a public interest law fellowship with Ann Claire Williams, judge for the Seventh Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals. This is the same court that reversed Jarrett's conviction because of his trial lawyer's constitutional deficiencies. Jarrett also clerked in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York with the late Honorable Deborah Batts. Jarrett launched the "Law Office of Jarrett Adams, PLLC." in 2017 and practices in both federal and state court throughout the country. Jarrett released his new book "Redeeming Justice" September 14th, 2021, telling the story of his wrongful conviction and interaction with the legal system as well as those of the clients he fights for.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We were so pleased to learn that Clarence Jones was exonerated. His attorneys worked tirelessly to correct the terrible injustice that led to his wrongful incarceration. We were honored to contribute to his case by filing an amicus brief. Amicus briefs allow us to weigh in on cases in which we do not represent a client, broadening our impact, and fulfilling one of our missions--to educate courts.

By contributing our expertise to cases involving forensic science with amicus briefs, we can reach audiences in jurisdictions where we might not normally practice, and advocate for strong science in a neutral way, instead of as an advocate for a particular party. While Clarence Jones was actually innocent, everyone deserves a fair trial, no matter their background or whether they are guilty or innocent.