

Actual Innocence

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Here are the stories of innocent men and women—and the system that put them away under the guise of justice. Now updated with new information, *Actual Innocence* sheds light on "a system that tolerates lying prosecutors, slumbering defense attorneys and sloppy investigators" (*Salt Lake Tribune*)—revealing the shocking flaws that can derail the legal process and the ways that DNA testing has often shattered so-called solid evidence that condemned American citizens to death.

Read by Michael Boatman

3 Cassettes, 5 hours 15 minutes

You're glancing through your morning paper when you see a story about a terrible assault in your neighborhood. Included in the story is a physical description of the suspect, and that description sounds a lot like you. Suddenly the police knock at your door and ask you about your whereabouts the night before. You were home alone. You spoke to no one. You own a red jacket like the perpetrator. You're dragged down to the police station, questioned for hours, hauled in front of a line-up. The victim swears you're the man who assaulted her. And so, after a two-day trial, you're sentenced to twenty years in jail. You're innocent. But with the whole criminal justice system arrayed against you, how can you prove it?

Far-fetched? It happened to Tony Snyder, in Alexandria, Virginia. Unfortunately, such scenarios occur every day in this country. Lazy police officers, crusading and hostile district attorneys, shaken and unreliable witnesses, coerced false confessions, corrupt crime labs, lying jailhouse snitches, biased juries - all of these obstacles confront the wrongfully accused in a criminal justice system geared more to get a conviction than get at the truth.

This powerful book tells the story of innocent people put in prison because one or another aspect of the system failed. In each case, the lawyers of the Innocence Project worked pro-bono to free these individuals, a struggle that can take years, even after DNA evidence has definitively cleared the suspects. Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld, once lawyers with the Bronx Legal Aid Society, co-founded The Innocence Project, which seeks post-conviction release through DNA testing. They are among the most prominent civil rights attorneys in the U.S.

Jim Dwyer is the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *New York Daily News* and author of several other books.

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