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Grover Thompson receives executive clemency 23 years after his death in prison

We are thrilled to announce that Grover Thompson has received executive clemency based on actual innocence. Grover was included in a group of 30 clemency requests granted by Gov. Bruce Rauner in the last days of his administration. This is the **first posthumous exoneration in Illinois** and only the 21st posthumous of the nation's 2,363 exonerations documented by the National Registry of Exonerations.

Grover was wrongfully convicted of a 1981 attempted murder in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Tragically, he died in prison 15 years later, in 1996, before he could seek help to prove his innocence.

Lt. Paul Echols (retired), of the Carbondale, Illinois, Police Department, uncovered Grover's innocence in 2007. While investigating several cold case murders in Carbondale, Lt. Echols along with Detective Jimmy Smith of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, obtained a confession from serial rapist and murderer Tim Krajcir for the crime Grover had been wrongfully convicted of.

In 1981, Grover was traveling by bus to visit family in Mississippi and stopped to rest in a Mount Vernon, Illinois, post office lobby. At the same time, Krajcir, a white man sometimes mistaken for a dark-complexioned man, broke into 72-year-old Ida White's home and stabbed her repeatedly while she resisted his attempts to rape her.

The police quickly set their sights on Grover after a neighbor reported a black man fleeing the scene. Despite that Grover, who was found sleeping in the post office across the street, could not have committed the crime due to a disability and was not wearing clothing that fit the description of the attacker, he was arrested, convicted and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

The case caught the attention of two Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Law students working for the Illinois Innocence Project. In 2011, the Illinois Innocence Project filed an Executive Clemency Petition with the Illinois Prisoner Review Board asking for Grover's posthumous exoneration, which Gov. Rauner initially denied.

Grover and his family should never have had to suffer this unspeakable injustice. Yet his exoneration 23 years after his death is a testament to what innocence organizations and law enforcement can achieve when they work together to do the right thing.

The Illinois Innocence Project, with Lt. Echols and Grover's nephew, S.T. Jamison, will publicly announce Grover's exoneration at a 2:00 pm press conference today in the Blue Room of the Illinois State Capitol. [For more on Grover Thompson's case ...](#)