

CODE MANUAL FOR PUBLIC SPREADSHEET

*In general, an **exoneration** occurs when a person who has been convicted of a crime is officially cleared based on new evidence of innocence.*

A more precise definition follows.

Exoneration—A person has been exonerated if he or she was convicted of a crime and later was either: (1) declared to be factually innocent by a government official or agency with the authority to make that declaration; or (2) relieved of all the consequences of the criminal conviction by a government official or body with the authority to take that action. The official action may be: (i) a complete pardon by a governor or other competent authority, whether or not the pardon is designated as based on innocence; (ii) an acquittal of all charges factually related to the crime for which the person was originally convicted; or (iii) a dismissal of all charges related to the crime for which the person was originally convicted, by a court or by a prosecutor with the authority to enter that dismissal. The pardon, acquittal, or dismissal must have been the result, at least in part, of evidence of innocence that either (i) was not presented at the trial at which the person was convicted; or (ii) if the person pled guilty, was not known to the defendant, the defense attorney and the court at the time the plea was entered. The evidence of innocence need not be an explicit basis for the official action that exonerated the person.

Exoneree—A person who was convicted of a crime and later officially declared innocent of that crime, or relieved of all legal consequences of the conviction because evidence of innocence that was not presented at trial required reconsideration of the case.

LAST NAME

Last name of exoneree, as exoneree identified *at the time of exoneration*

FIRST NAME

First name of exoneree, as exoneree identified *at the time of exoneration*

AGE AT CRIME YRS

The age of the exoneree at the time of the crime in years

RACE

Race of exoneree, as exoneree identifies.

Black

Hispanic

Native American : includes Alaska Native

Other : this includes native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

Caucasian : refers to white Americans

Asian : includes all peoples on the Asian continent (including Indian, Filipinos, and Indonesians) except Russians

Don't Know

SEX

Sex of exoneree, as exoneree identified *at the time of the crime*.

STATE

The state in which the crime was committed. For federal cases, the value will be in the form Fed-XX where XX is the postal abbreviation for the state in which the crime was committed (e.g., "Fed-MA" for a federal case in Massachusetts).

COUNTY OF CRIME

The county in which the crime was committed. Does not include the words "County" or "Parish." For "independent cities" that are separately governed and not a part of the counties that surround them, the county will be named as, e.g., "Norfolk City." For contiguous city/county units that have the same geographic borders, or for combined city/county political units, we just give the name (e.g., "San Francisco" or "Philadelphia").

If the conviction was in a federal court, the district where the trial occurred is indicated in parentheses (e.g. (Southern)). If there is only one federal district in that state, the field will be blank.

TAGS

A : Arson cases

The exoneree was convicted of arson or the exoneration depended at least in part on evidence that the exoneree did not commit arson.

CDC : Codefendant confession

A codefendant of the exoneree, or a person who might have been charged as a codefendant, gave a pre-conviction confession that also implicated the exoneree. This does not apply if the only "confession" is a guilty plea from the co-Defendant.

CIU : Conviction Integrity Unit

A Conviction Integrity Unit in the prosecutorial office that prosecuted the exoneree helped secure the exoneration.

CSH : Child sex abuse hysteria or satanic ritual hysteria

The exoneree was convicted of child sex abuse as part of a wave of child sex abuse prosecutions in the 1980s and 1990s based on aggressive and suggestive interviews of children who were thought to be victims. These cases generally included bizarre and implausible claims by the supposed victims, frequently featuring satanic rituals.

CV : Child victim

At least one victim is under 18.

F : Female exoneree

The exoneree is female

FED : Federal court prosecution
The trial court was a federal court

H : Homicide
The exoneree was convicted of either murder or manslaughter.

JI : Jailhouse Informant
A witness who was incarcerated with the exoneree testified or reported that the exoneree confessed to him or her.

M : Misdemeanor
The worst crime for which the exoneree was convicted was a misdemeanor.

NC : No crime occurred
The exoneree was convicted of a crime that did not occur, either because an accident, act of self-defense, or a suicide was mistaken for a crime, or the exoneree was accused of a fabricated crime that never happened.

P : Plea
Exoneree pled guilty at 1st or 2nd trial

PH : Posthumous exoneration
The exoneration occurred after the person died, including cases in which a living codefendant was exonerated under circumstances that clearly indicate that the deceased person would have been exonerated if he or she were alive.

SBS : Shaken baby syndrome
The exoneree was convicted of injuring or killing an infant by violent shaking, based on a medical diagnosis that is now highly controversial.

WORST CRIME DISPLAY

Choose the description of the single worst crime—from the top of the list down— for which the exoneree was convicted of or pled guilty to.

Murder
Manslaughter
Attempted Murder
Accessory to Murder
Sexual Assault
Child Sex Abuse
Child Abuse
Robbery
Assault
Arson
Kidnapping
Terrorism

Supporting Terrorism
Attempt, Violent
Other Violent Felony
Burglary/Unlawful Entry
Theft
Forgery
Possession of Stolen Property
Destruction of Property
Drug Possession or Sale
Gun Possession or Sale
Other Weapon Possession or Sale
Sex Offender Registration
Tax Evasion/Fraud
Immigration
Fraud
Bribery
Perjury
Official Misconduct
Traffic Offense
Conspiracy
Solicitation
Obstruction of Justice
Failure to Pay Child Support
Dependent Adult Abuse
Attempt, Nonviolent
Other Nonviolent Felony
Military Justice Offense
Menacing
Stalking
Harassment
Threats
Filing a False Report
Other

LIST ADD'L CRIMES RECODE

Additional crimes for which the exoneree was convicted by trial or guilty plea, and for which s/he was later exonerated.

OCCURRED

The year the crime was committed. If the crime occurred over a range of dates that includes more than one year, this will be the year of the last known date.

CONVICTED

The year of the conviction of the crime(s) for which the exoneree was exonerated.

SENTENCE

The exoneree's original sentence, even if later reduced on appeal (if convicted more than once, this is the first sentence).

The order of severity is:

- **Death**
- **Life without parole**
- **Life**
- Any indeterminate term-of-years with a Life top (e.g., "10 to Life")
- Any determinate or indeterminate term-of-years without a Life top (e.g., "10 to 20 years")
- Any determinate term of years (e.g., "25 years")
- **Probation**
- **Community service**
- **Fine**
- **Not sentenced**
- **Unknown**

DNA

DNA evidence was a substantial factor in the factual basis of the exoneration.

The factual basis for the exoneration included DNA evidence, but the DNA evidence was not a substantial factor in the basis for the exoneration.

FC

False Confession : the exoneree made a statement to law enforcement at any point during the proceedings which was interpreted or presented by law enforcement as an admission of participation in or presence at the crime, even if the statement was not presented at trial. A statement is not a confession if it was made to someone other than law enforcement. A statement that is not at odds with the defense is not a confession. A guilty plea is not a confession.

MWID

Mistaken Witness ID : at least one eyewitness affirmatively AND MISTAKENLY said that he or she saw the exoneree commit the crime, or saw the exoneree under circumstances that suggest that the exoneree participated in the crime (e.g. Witness claims he saw Exoneree flee from the scene).

F/MFE

False or Misleading Forensic Evidence : Exoneree's conviction was based at least in part on forensic information that was (1) caused by errors in forensic testing, (2) based on unreliable or unproven methods, (3) expressed with exaggerated and misleading confidence, or (4) fraudulent.

P/FA

Perjury or False Accusation : A person other than the exoneree committed perjury by making a false statement under oath that incriminated the exoneree in the crime for which the exoneree was later exonerated, or made a similar unsworn statement that would have been perjury if made under oath.

OM

Official Misconduct : Police, prosecutors, or other government officials significantly abused their authority or the judicial process in a manner that contributed to the exoneree's conviction.

ILD

Inadequate Legal Defense : The exonoree's lawyer at trial provided obviously and grossly inadequate representation.

POSTING DATE

Date the case was posted to the Exoneration database