

Innocence Founded.

A CONVERSATION WITH JIM MCCLOSKEY, FOUNDER OF CENTURION
THE FIRST INNOCENCE ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES.



WRITTEN BY:
Rob Mooney
CEO OF SNOWDEN
LANE PARTNERS,
& CHAIRMAN OF
CENTURION

I recently had the pleasure of sitting down with Jim McCloskey, Founder of Centurion, the oldest national non-profit dedicated to exonerating people who have been wrongfully convicted. Since its founding in 1983, Centurion has freed 63 men and women serving life or death sentences for crimes they didn't commit, and Jim is widely recognized as one of the earliest and leading advocates in this area.

Jim recently wrote a memoir – "When Truth Is All You Have" – chronicling his life story and the work of Centurion. It's an intimate look at the incredible pain and injustice endured by wrongfully convicted individuals, and the origins of the growing "movement across the country to right these wrongs."

Famed author John Grisham – whose main character in his

latest novel, *The Guardians*, is based on Jim – wrote the forward, and I can't recommend it enough.

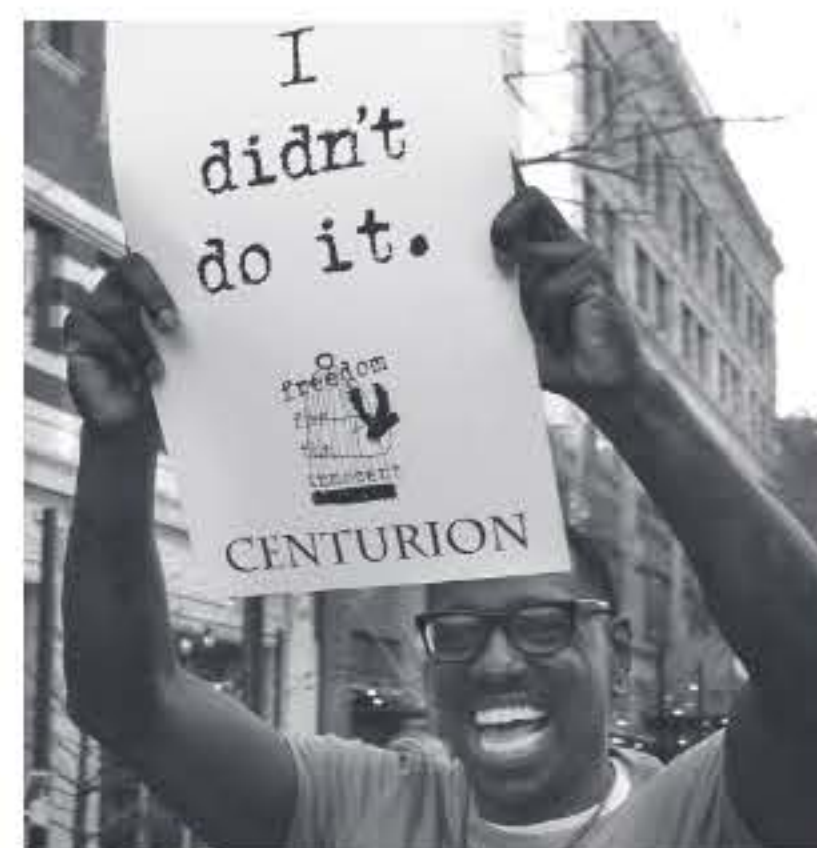
Q1 WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO FOUND THE FIRST INNOCENCE MOVEMENT IN THE US?

For the first 12 years of our operations, we were the only organization in the United States, or in the world for that matter, devoted to exonerating innocent inmates serving life or death sentences for the crimes of others. Our only concern was keeping our heads down and freeing these folks, case by case. We had no idea that what we were doing would eventually spread throughout the U.S. and give rise to 55 "innocence groups" inspired with the same mission. We take no credit for this movement, but are happy and humbled to see its organic growth and development.

Q2 WHAT'S CENTURION'S RECORD AND HAS THE US CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS?

We have freed 63 falsely imprisoned people across America and Canada, two of whom came within days of being executed in Texas. They spent 1,330 years collectively behind bars for no reason at all.

These plus another 2,200 documented exonerations that have taken place across Americas since 1989 have awakened a sleeping and complacent criminal justice system to the notion that justice has misfired in the nation's courtrooms far more often than anyone previously believed.



LAMONTE MCINTYRE FREED: 10.13.17

Consequently, a number of changes have been initiated by those who administer criminal justice with the intent of addressing

the problem of false convictions. Chief among them is the increased number of reform minded, newly elected progressive county prosecutors who have set up Conviction Review Units to examine possible wrongful convictions that have taken place in prior years by their predecessors. This has led to a more receptive attitude and willingness to consider new evidence of innocence presented to them by Centurion on forgotten cases. This portends a possible breakthrough that hopefully will short-circuit the 5-10 years it traditionally takes for Centurion to free those whose cases it takes on, and thus save them several more years of needless suffering.

Q3 HOW HAS DNA TESTING IMPACTED THE WORK OF CENTURION?

We've freed ten people who were exonerated by DNA. Although most crime scenes and the great majority of Centurion's cases don't contain biological evidence, since its advent in 1989 DNA testing of crime scene evidence has led to the post-conviction exoneration of 370 inmates nationwide, all of whom had been serving life or death sentences for murder and/or sexual assault.

Q4 DOES CENTURION RECEIVE ANY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO PURSUE ITS MISSION?

Centurion is an independent non-profit organization whose entire budget is totally dependent on the financial support primarily of individuals, but also a few churches and foundations. We have received no governmental financial support. This has enabled us to remain free from outside influence and maintain our complete operational independence.

Q5 HOW DO YOU SEE CENTURION'S MISSION BEING PURSUED IN THE FUTURE AND HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP?

Our primary mission is and will always continue to be freeing the incarcerated innocent as we have done for the last 40 years. With their release from decades of false confinement, it is also our mission to assist them as they seek to reclaim their lives and find a way to help reintegrate



BILLY RAY DAVIS FREED: 04.06.17

into society. With the upcoming release of, "When Truth Is All You Have," we hope to be more of a national voice for the falsely convicted men and women who suffer the insufferable.

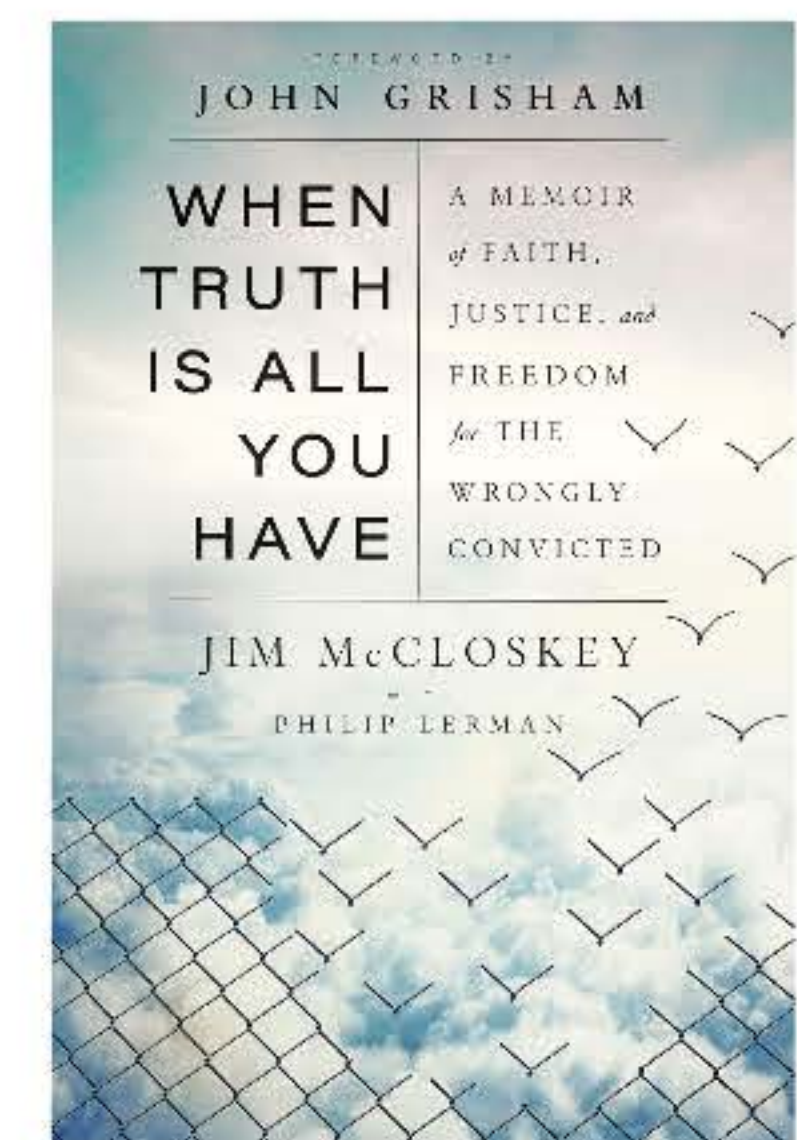
Many thanks to Jim McCloskey for his tireless efforts. He shined a light on a part of society that was overlooked and unknown, and his influence on the innocence movement cannot be overstated. Given the current national focus on prison reform, Centurion's work is more relevant and needed than ever before.

63

INDIVIDUALS FREED WHO WERE SERVING LIFE OR DEATH SENTENCES FOR CRIMES THEY DID NOT COMMIT.

1,330

COLLECTIVE NUMBER OF YEARS THEY WERE IMPRISONED



FORWARD BY JOHN GRISHAM

1,100

NEW REQUESTS FOR HELP EVERY YEAR

CENTURION RELIES ON SUPPORT OF GENEROUS DONORS TO CONTINUE OUR FIGHT TO FREE THE INNOCENT.

centurion.org