

194 DNA EXONERATIONS: THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE DNA STUDY OF INNOCENCE NETWORK CASES

Greg Hampikian, PhD

Error is an expected component of every human system, and error analysis is an essential consideration in scientific testing. With 2.3 million Americans currently behind bars, and over 5 million felons, it is not surprising that there have been a number of wrongful convictions in the United States. Investigating, litigating, and scientifically assessing claims of wrongful conviction is a complicated and challenging process. We have reviewed 194 DNA exonerations, in order to characterize them in terms of: the types of evidence used to exonerate, the method of DNA analysis employed, the factors that played a role in the original conviction, whether new suspects were identified through database hits, if a false confession was involved, and other components. Finally, we show that while DNA analysis is capable of correcting errors, it should not be considered immune from error.