

Free Delandis Adams



On April 24, 1993, police discovered the body of Darrien Payton in the trunk of a car that had been abandoned. Three days later, on April 27, Chicago Police officer Darren Washington received an anonymous phone call about the death of Payton that directed police to a house at 229 West 110th Place in Chicago, Illinois.

Delandis Adams, Sherman Scullark, Ravon Fountain, Darnell Lockett, Manuel Mathews, Dwan Royal, Ronald Glover, and Marvel Scott were all arrested for the murder. All were beaten and tortured by Det. Michael McDermott, who has a record of torture in scores of cases, including many in which the defendants have been exonerated. Fountain and Glover testified against the rest in court. The charges against Fountain were dropped, and Glover received a lighter sentence. Adams, Scullark, Lockett, Mathews, Royal, and Scott were convicted of murder. All were given sentences ranging from 25 years to natural life in prison.

Delandis Adams was 20 years old at the time of his arrest and torture.

Co-defendants of Delandis Adams

Delandis Adams

Name	Disposition of Case	Key Information
Sherman Scullark	Life sentence	
Ravon Fountain	Charges dropped	Coerced into testifying against the other defendants; murdered Feb. 2018
Darnell Lockett	25 years to life	Confessed later that he & Dwan Royal were the killers
Manuel Mathews	25 years to life	
Dwan Royal	25 years to life	

Ronald Glover	10 years	Coerced into testifying against the other defendants
Marvel Scott	25 years to life	

Since their convictions Fountain and Glover have given sworn affidavits that they were coerced into testifying against the others. Lockett has sworn in an affidavit that he and Royal, together with Paul Hawkins, who was never arrested or charged, killed Payton and that Adams was not present or involved at all.

In fact, Adams claims that his arrest, torture and conviction stemmed from a vendetta against him by McDermott because he was acquitted in a previous case brought by the detective against him. He claims that McDermott told him that "I know you are innocent of this crime, but you got away with the last one I had you on."

This saga began when Chicago Police Officer Darren Washington received an anonymous call regarding Payton's death on April 27, 1993. The caller directed Washington to a house at 229 West 110th Place, where he found and arrested all the men. At trial Washington testified that, while he was at the house, Fountain asked to speak with him privately.

Washington said that Fountain said that he knew why the police had come and that he was present "when they killed that boy." Fountain said he could not go to jail because he would be killed there.

After Fountain's arrest he was taken to Area Two Violent Crimes where McDermott interviewed him. McDermott testified that Fountain said he saw Payton at the house with Adams and "several others." McDermott said that Fountain declined to give a handwritten statement and preferred to give his statement before the grand jury.

Police found bloodstains, a gun, and cords in the house at 229 W. 110th St. Beer bottles recovered at the scene had fingerprints that positively matched the prints of Mathews, Royal, and Glover.

On May 11 and May 13, 1993, separate fires broke out at the house, both of which were started by a hand-held open flame. The second fire caused significant damage to the building. Glover testified that Adams told him that he started the fires to destroy evidence in the house.

Delandis Adams claims that upon his arrest and interrogation Detectives James Boylan and Michael McDermott did not recite his Miranda rights, and when Adams refused to give a statement the detectives beat him with a phonebook.

Glover and Fountain, the State's primary witnesses, said they were both members of the Conservative Vice Lords gang at the time of the incident. In exchange for his testimony the State agreed to drop Glover's pending murder charges and to propose a 10-year sentence for Glover's aggravated kidnapping conviction. Fountain was never charged in connection with Payton's death.

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office kept both Glover and Fountain in witness protection before the trial.

Both Adams and Scullark were convicted in separate trials. At both trials Glover and Fountain testified that in the late afternoon and evening of April 23, 1993, they were at a house at 229 West 110th Place in Chicago, Illinois where Adams, along with codefendants Sherman Scullark, Darnell Lockett, Manuel Mathews, Dwan Royal, and Marvel Scott, held Payton captive. Payton was bound and blindfolded in an upstairs room of the house.

Glover testified that Adams told him that Payton was being punished for violating the gang's rules. Fountain testified that Payton was bleeding from his mouth. Glover testified that he heard "bumps" and screaming from the room where Payton was being held. At one point, they brought a piece of lumber into the room where Payton was bound, after which Glover heard more "bumping" noises.

Glover testified that they eventually carried Payton, who was wrapped in a blanket, blindfolded, and had a cord wrapped around his neck, out to a white car and put him in the trunk. Glover said that Scott drove the car away. Fountain did not see them put Payton in the white car but said that he saw Adams and Royal remove speakers from the car's trunk. Fountain said he heard the car start and drive away. Fountain later saw a mop and bucket filled with what looked like blood in the room where Payton had been held. Fountain also said that he saw Scullark emptying this bucket the next morning.

Minnie Payton, Darren Payton's mother, testified that she received three phone calls from her son in the early morning hours of April 24, 1993. She said Payton told her to bring his car to the intersection of 71st Street and State Street and leave a package that was under the seat of the car on the passenger's side of the car. Mrs. Payton complied. While waiting at the intersection, a car pulled up and Lockett and Mathews exited. They asked her if she was looking for Payton. Minnie got out of the car, leaving the package on the passenger side as she had been instructed. Her husband picked her up and brought her home. When she arrived home, she received another call from Payton saying he would be home in five minutes.

Around 8 a.m. on April 24, 1993, Payton's body was found in the trunk of his car. He was blindfolded and had a cord wrapped around his neck. He had been strangled to death.

The courts held Adams and Scullark responsible for the murder and aggravated kidnapping, based on an accountability theory. The court sentenced Scullark to natural life in prison and Adams to 80 years.

Fountain later executed an affidavit in which he swore that Det. McDermott beat him and forced him to sign a statement naming Adams as the killer of Payton. Fountain said that McDermott told him he would not be prosecuted for the murder if he agreed to testify against Adams.

Raven Fountain and Darnell Luckett affidavits:

RAVEN FOUNTAIN: in his affidavit said that he was pressured into being a state witness, or be charged with the crime and face the death penalty. He chose to be a state witness and told police that Darnell Luckett, Manuel Mathews, Dwan Royal, Ronald Glover killed Darren Payton. He was told that if he included two more of his friends that he was not going to be charged. So he named Marvin Scott. Fountain admitted that he does not know who killed Darren Payton and that the State's attorney didn't know either. All they wanted was to "get" "Goolie and Baby G" and they didn't care what they had to do to get them. Fountain also said that the police coerced Ronald Glover into supporting his initial testimony.

DARNELL LUCKETT: states that Delandis Adams along with Sherman Scullark, Manuel Mathews, and Marvin Scott are all innocent. He admits that he, along with Dawn Royal, and Paul Hawkins killed Darrien Payton for his money. Luckett states that Paul Hawkins was the person who set up the situation. Hawkins was with Payton on April 23, 1993 for the entire day. Hawkins called Dwan Royal throughout the day asking if they were in or not about robbing Payton. Hawkins also stressed that importance that Payton had to be grabbed on the South Side since he had to be there that day for his daughter's birthday. Luckett explained that Payton was known on the West-Side of Chicago as "King Heroin" who sold "dope."