

Actual Innocence for Lawyers

Co-sponsored with the Innocence Project of Texas

Austin, TX: August 6-7, 2026 12.00 CLE, including 1.00 Ethics

Course Directors

Chase Baumgartner – Austin
Gary Udashen – Dallas

Jessi Freud – Waco
Mike Ware – Fort Worth

Overview

Innocence for a citizen accused may come at a number of intervals in a case. Trial counsel may be able to investigate the facts of the allegation and develop evidence of innocence which, when presented to the prosecutor, justifies a dismissal of the case. Thorough investigation may also result in a “not guilty” verdict at trial when the evidence and the procedures of a trial produce a “not guilty” verdict. Very often, though, it is the prosecution of a Writ of Habeas Corpus which results in a determination that the citizen who was convicted is innocent. This seminar will train on the development of an innocence claim at each of the three stages of litigation described. Attention will be paid to the type of investigation, the assistance which will be necessary and the process of the prosecution of the claim.

Agenda

Thursday, August 6, 2026

- 12:00 pm Registration
- 12:55 pm Opening Remarks
- 1:00 pm Update on Legal Issues ~ Gary Udashen
- 2:00 pm DNA Q&A: Activity Level Propositions ~ Matt Quataro & Chase Baumgartner
- 3:15 pm Cognitive Bias in Prosecuting Carmen Mejia ~ Colin Bellair & Sarah Byrom
- 4:30 pm Tex. R. Displ. Rule 3.09 & the Future ~ TBD
- 5:15 pm Adjourn
- 6:00 pm Dinner Program: Tommy Lee Walker’s Exoneration ~ Cynthia Garza & Margaret Burnham
- 8:00 pm Adjourn

Friday, August 7, 2026

- 8:00 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 8:25 am Opening Remarks
- 8:30 am Allen Andre Causey & YSM ~ Chase Baumgartner, Jessi Freud, & Mike Ware
- 9:30 am Investigator Presentation ~ Kayla Walker & David Conklin
- 10:45 am Debunking Myths about Non-fatal Strangulation ~ Dr. Jodi Wieters
- 12:15 pm Lunch Presentation: Actual Innocence: History & a Path Forward ~ Hon. David Newell
- 1:15 pm Forensic Firearm Issues ~ Jill Prather
- 2:15 pm Exoneration Panel ~ TBD (Ethics)
- 3:15 pm Adjourn

WWW.TCDLA.COM

This course is funded by a grant from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

Travel Stipends

TCDLA will reimburse travel expenses (flight, Ubers, rental car & fuel, or mileage at the standard mileage-rate) up to \$250. Anything beyond that is the registrant’s obligation. Registrant should make their own travel arrangements; reimbursement forms will be provided at on-site registration.

Hotel Stipends & Meeting Location

TCDLA will cover the hotel cost for two nights, check in Wednesday, August 5, 2026 and check out August 7, 2026. Attendees are responsible for calling the hotel, making a room reservation in our block and guaranteeing the room. TCDLA will move the room to the direct bill upon attendees’ arrival. In the event you need to cancel attendees are responsible for canceling with the hotel. TCDLA will not pay no show fees. The meeting will be held at Wyndham Garden Austin, located at 3401 South I-35 Austin, TX 78741. The TCDLA room rate is \$129 for a single/double room. Call the Wyndham Garden Hotel at (713) 222-2100 and refer to “TCDLA” to receive the group rate. The group rate is available until July 23, 2026, or until room block is full, whichever occurs first.

Registration | Materials

Registration before 7/23/2026	
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$FREE (for all classes, meals, and materials) *General Enrollment Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Defense Lawyer<input type="checkbox"/> Judge<input type="checkbox"/> Student<input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation Specialist<input type="checkbox"/> Paralegal<input type="checkbox"/> Investigator<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Assistant<input type="checkbox"/> Social Worker<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	Add Vegetarian Meal Option* <small>*No accommodations will be made onsite. If you have dietary needs not covered by the vegetarian option, please contact register@tcdla.com.</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$80 (onsite registration after 7/23/2026) *General Enrollment Information

Unable to pay tuition? E-mail mschank@tcdla.com to request tuition assistance.

Register - Payment Must Accompany Registration

Online www.tcdla.com
Email register@tcdla.com
Phone 512.478.2514
Fax 512.469.0512
Mail 6808 Hill Meadow Dr | Austin, TX 78736

Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, or special prosecutors MUST request in advance a special exception to this policy be granted by prior approval from the Course Directors and an Officer of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. Requests for consideration MUST be submitted in advance at least 14 days before the seminar begins by emailing mschank@tcdla.com; no onsite exceptions will be made.

Contact Information

Name _____

Bar Number _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Cell _____ Phone _____

Join TCDLA #tcdlastrong #onevoice

New Member or Second-Year Member \$100

Endorser Name: _____

Renew Membership \$180

Public Defender \$60

prefer not to participate in auto renewal

For your convenience, TCDLA uses AUTO RENEWAL for all membership dues, using your checking account or credit card. You will be automatically enrolled in the auto renewal program so you do not have to do anything while continuing to enjoy membership benefits every year! You can always opt out of auto-renewal anytime by simply emailing mduarte@tcdla.com or by checking the opt-out option above.

Payment Check Credit Card *4% Convenience Fee will be applied

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ CVV _____

General Information

Please read before registering: Because TCDLA cannot sustain its present operations solely with grant funds and the nominal fees it assesses for tuition, meals, and/or travel stipends. The additional voluntary fee, which is deposited as private funds, will be used for expenses that exceed what is allowed under state grant guidelines for participant food and lodging costs as well as staff salaries and benefits.

CANCELLATION POLICY: To receive a refund-less 10% processing fee-cancellations must be received in writing 14 days prior to the seminar (email kreston@tcdla.com). Registrants who paid tuition and are not entitled to a refund will receive the course materials. Tuition waiver recipients must attend the program to receive materials. Tax Notice: \$36 of your annual dues (\$19 if a student member) is for a one-year subscription to the VOICE for the Defense. Dues to TCDLA are not deductible as a charitable contribution but may be deducted as an ordinary business expense. deductible as a charitable contribution but may be deducted as an ordinary business expense.

MEDIA CONSENT: I hereby grant permission to the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (TCDLA) to use photographs and/or video of me taken at this event in publications, news releases, online, and in other communications related to the mission of TCDLA.