



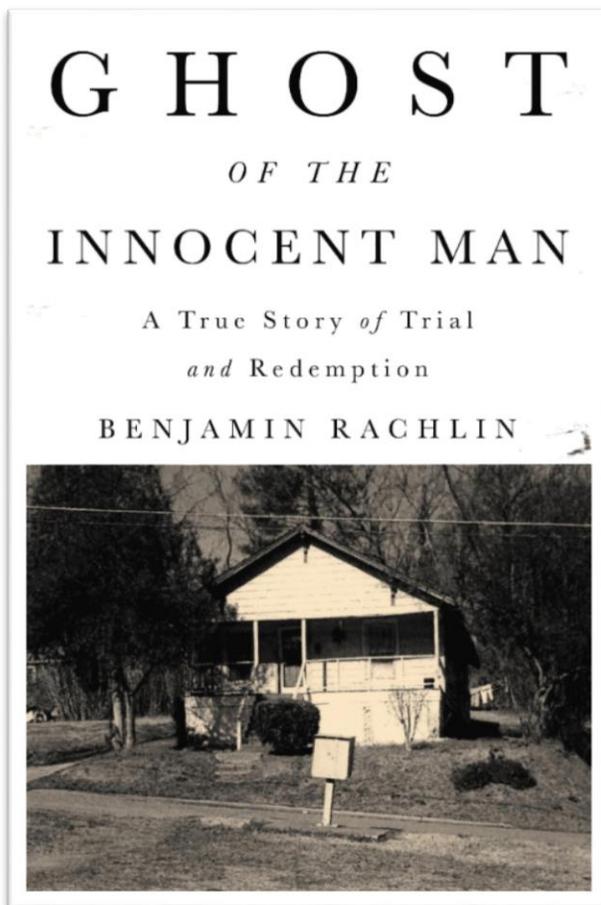
Publicity Contacts: Lena Khidritskaya Little,
Assistant Director of Publicity
Lena.Little@hbgusa.com | 212-364-1406
Julie Ertl, Publicist
Julie.Ertl@hbgusa.com | 212-364-1135

LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY

NEWS OF BOOKS AND AUTHORS *For immediate release*

“An absorbing true-crime saga....Rachlin’s debut combines a gripping legal drama with a penetrating exposé of the shoddy investigative and trial standards nationwide....His narrative offers a moving evocation of faith under duress.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, STARRED review



“In his **moving first book**, Rachlin, **with confidence and care**, relays both the terrifying personal costs and complex legalities, so dependent on fallible humans, of wrongful conviction and imprisonment.”

—*Booklist*

“A chilling story of wrongful conviction, focused on one man’s ordeal, and the growth of the movement to support actual innocence. In his debut book, Rachlin ably manages a complex narrative....empathetic, thorough... **A sprawling, powerful, unsettling longitudinal account of an overdue legal movement.**”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Ghost of the Innocent Man is nothing less than a masterpiece of investigative reporting and virtuosic writing. It is a book that brilliantly substantiates society’s elemental promise to its citizenry—that we not have our freedoms wrongly taken from us. Benjamin Rachlin’s book is Greek drama brought into our own times. **It will change readers’ lives, I think, and inspire them. It’s that good.**”

—Richard Ford, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Independence Day*

Benjamin Rachlin was 26 years old when he read a local newspaper story in North Carolina about a man named Willie J. Grimes, who had been wrongfully imprisoned for 24 years. In an instant, Rachlin understood exactly how long this was—the entire lifetime of his younger brother: nearly a quarter century of life ripped away from an innocent man.

Already named one of *Publishers Weekly's* Top 10 History Books of the Fall, **GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN: A True Story of Trial and Redemption** (Little, Brown; August 15, 2017; \$27.00 Hardcover; ISBN: 9780316311496), Rachlin's remarkable first book, shares the gripping, often heartbreaking, and powerful account of Willie J. Grimes and his long but ultimately triumphant road to justice. With fast-paced chapters alternating between stories of the time Grimes spent in jail, how he managed to adapt and survive, and the people who fought to get him released throughout his horrific ordeal, Rachlin dives headfirst into issues of race, law, gender, religion, and politics.

Rachlin also provides sharp analysis of the enormous prison industrial complex and the criminal justice system in America. The United States sees millions of criminal convictions a year and now has more than 2 million adults behind bars—that's **nearly 1 out of every 100**. We know we've only scratched the surface of how many of them are wrongfully convicted. At the time of Grimes's trial in 1987, there was no national accounting for wrongful convictions—and no procedure in place for fighting them. It would be another 25 years before anyone began collecting the names of those who had been wrongfully convicted, currently listed on the [National Registry of Exonerations](#), which has since grown to include the names of more than **2,000 citizens**.

Rachlin reveals the people and organizations fighting for social justice on behalf of those without a voice. One of those people, Christine Mumma, was Grimes's crusader. Mumma never stopped believing in his innocence, and it was she who was responsible for spearheading the founding of the [North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission](#), the only organization of its kind in the country. Grimes's exoneration is one of ten that the Innocence Inquiry Commission has secured since its inception, and Rachlin's book is the first account of the commission, both how it was formed and how it works behind the scenes.

As Steve Fischer, executive director of the New England Independent Booksellers Association, says, "**GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN** does for our criminal justice system what Matt Desmond's *EVICTED* did for our housing crisis. They share the same meticulous research, the same sense of outrage at injustice, and the same level of empathy and compassion for their subjects." Deeply reported, this book is a compelling and vital contribution to our understanding of social justice in America.



About the Author

Benjamin Rachlin grew up in New Hampshire. He studied English at Bowdoin College, where he won the Sinkinson Prize, and writing at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, where he won Schwartz and Brauer fellowships. His work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Time*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*. He lives near Boston. *Ghost of the Innocent Man* is his first book.

GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN

A True Story of Trial and Redemption
by Benjamin Rachlin

Little, Brown and Company | August 15, 2017
ISBN: 978-0-316-31149-6 | \$27.00 | Hardcover

Early Praise for GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN

"*Ghost of the Innocent Man* is deeply researched and, more importantly, deeply felt. For both reasons and many more, it is a profound meditation on the human condition and a vital contribution to the literature. The endurance and fortitude of Willie Grimes surpass those of any athlete or explorer. The passages in which Christine Mumma assembles lawmen and legislatures of all different creeds to help resolve an urgent national crisis should make us all consider these current times as not just toxic and tragic but filled with the possibility of hope and redemption. In the end, Benjamin Rachlin takes us through the justice system in all its immutability and shows us the light we can wield should we so choose."

—Jeff Hobbs, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace*

"**Enraging, instructive, and profoundly moving, *Ghost of the Innocent Man* is a gripping lesson** in the terrible costs of our flawed criminal justice system and the power that individuals have to change its course. The story of how a gentle soul like Willie J. Grimes received an undeserved life sentence is heartbreaking—full of human cruelty and carelessness and worse. But in the care and exactitude of Benjamin Rachlin's telling, it is also **an inspiring call for readily achievable reform**. With judicious compassion, he narrates the errors, omissions, and societal forces that led to this wrongful conviction, setting it all squarely in the context of a persistent national disgrace, and reminding us of our responsibility to work toward true justice. The effect is **remarkable and unforgettable.**"

—Eli Sanders, Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *While the City Slept*

GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN by the Numbers

- No one knows for certain how many people in prison in America are innocent, but the best minds who've studied this *have* developed statistical models. **Their best guess is about 4%.**
- Across the country, **there are a little more than 2 million Americans in jail or prison right now.** Four percent of that is 80,000 people.
- In North Carolina in the 2016 fiscal year there were 28,500 felony convictions. Four percent of that is 1,140. **More than 1,000 innocent people a year. In just one state.**
- In 2012, the year Willie was exonerated, **a record number of exonerations occurred in America.** That record was broken in 2014, and it's been rebroken every year since.
- **We're now approaching 200 exonerations annually.** We passed 2,000 this March, in the 20 years since DNA evidence came into use. We now average about three every week.
- Just **since 2011, the number of exonerations annually has more than doubled.** Experts who study this believe we have just scratched the surface.



21,730 Days
Portrait by Christer Berg

Willie Grimes (second from left); exonerees Dwayne Dail and Greg Taylor;
and Christine Mumma, who cofounded the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission

Join Benjamin Rachlin on tour for GHOST OF THE INNOCENT MAN

August 16

Harvard Book Store / 7:00 PM / Cambridge, MA

September 7

Gibson's Bookstore / 5:30 PM / Concord, NH

September 12

Duke University with The Innocence Project / time TK / Durham, NC

September 14

UNC Wilmington / time TK / Wilmington, NC

September 21

Andover Bookstore / 6:30 PM / Andover, MA

October 12

Buttonwood Books Coffee with the Authors / 9:45 AM / Cohasset, MA