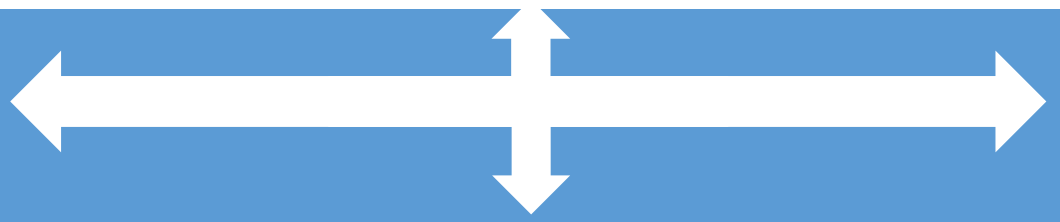


Reflection



In the fall of my Sophomore year of college I took a class about wrongful convictions. In this course we closely analyzed the aspects of the legal system that have at times led to error in the arrest and conviction of innocent citizens. In this course we had lectures about the statistics of this phenomenon at large, but we also spent a significant amount of time reading the memoirs of some of the individuals who had been wrongfully convicted. Those books made me cry and made my blood boil. They also made me hope in the potential that someday the record would be set straight and these men would be free at last, and this unfortunately was not always the case.

In this class I wrote an extended piece about the wrongful conviction of Colorado native, Timothy Masters. Masters experiences with the justice system brought light to issues in the legal proceedings. The entirety of this piece will be included below, but in this reflection I focus on how this piece developed my skills as a writer.

Looking Back



This piece was an analytical piece that considered the errors in the legal handling of Timothy Masters case, while also including the greater theories of wrongful conviction that Masters experience embodied. Considering the previous knowledge, I had on this writing style, I knew I need to be concise with my wording as to simplify the advanced concepts in such a way that it would be easy to follow for not only an academic scholar, but potentially even a person with no knowledge of the justice system. In analytical writing, I also knew the importance of

connect the complex theories to the more detailed nuances so that the relationship between Masters experience, and the issues with the justice system could be clearly understood.

As the point of this paper was to outline the various errors that led to Masters' wrongful conviction, and I was enrolled in a class that discussed this phenomenon at length, my knowledge on the topic was vast. Furthermore, this specific analytical piece was centered around Masters' experience. As I had read Masters' extended memoir as well as participated in various class discussions about his case, my knowledge on this specific topic was thorough.

After reading Masters' story and participating in the lively class discussion, I felt very impassioned to write at length about the various issues that led to this man spending over a decade in prison for a crime that he didn't commit. Considering this, my greatest challenge with this piece was deciding which details to expand on and which to just highlight. I wanted to discuss every issue and lay out how all the problems with the case accumulated. I wanted to discuss extensively about how this could have been avoided with adjustments in protocol. As a result, Finding the balance between drafting a novel and avoiding cramming too much information into too little space was by far my greatest difficulty.

Looking Forward



After looking back over my final compilation for this project, the aspect that I would most want to keep working on is my conclusion paragraph. Even though the style of this piece was meant to be formal, in our concluding remarks the professor wanted the students to include our own thoughts and considerations about the book and the justice system moving forward. In this concluding paragraph, I definitely think I voiced my opinions of the case of Timothy Masters. That being said, I still think I would want to continue to tweak it a bit more so that the other

major concepts I discussed throughout the body of the piece were summarized clearly at the end of the paper as well.

This class, as well as this book truly introduced me to the citizens of society that are often too easily turned a blind eye from. There are so many issues with the current state of the justice system in the United States, and it was not until this class that I truly saw the issues in front of me. Considering this, in the future I would revise this piece into a shorted Op-Ed for a popular audience. My goal with that would be to introduce others to the injustices that they may be unaware of, and then use that awareness to motivate others to push for reform in the criminal justice system.

Working through this piece helped me understand how to put big theories in conversation with specific events. Pulling together various research studies, personal narratives, and class conversations challenged me to find and fine tune the connections between all this information that I had to sift through. This practice has been immensely beneficial to the Literature Reviews I have had to draft in the time since I submitted this paper. I am now able to find connections between researchers, scholars, and authors alike with greater ease. Placing these various works in conversation with each other was a much needed skill and has become very valuable in my courses and career work.

Looking Inward



Overall, after looking back over this piece of writing I feel pretty good about how I put the final composition together. The most important thing to me with any piece of writing that I submit is that I feel that I have done justice to the topics, themes, people, events, etc. that I have written about. In this piece, overall I feel that I have done justice to the wrongful conviction

of Timothy Masters and how his experiences fall into greater issues with the justice system in the United States.

This piece taught me about both writing practices and allowed me to learn more about my own self as a writer. With this piece I learned how to put theories and real life examples in conversation. This allowed me to create a well-rounded final product. As a writer, I also learned that I create my best work when I feel passionate about the story I am trying to share. As This piece inspired me, I was comfortable to risk breaking the formal analytical voice in areas. This allowed me to potentially provide the information in an applicable an interesting way to people even beyond academia. to include more descriptive notes.

Looking Outward



My time in the course studying wrongful conviction inspired me in such a way that I continued to take classes learning about individual inequalities in both the legal justice system and in other sects of modern society. As the various courses that I enrolled in following this course aligned with similar thematic genres, the type of papers and coursework that I have completed in the time since has also echoed similar aspects to the ones included in this paper. In this way, this paper was similar to others like it, but stands a part in its own right as I still feel very attached to the issues discussed in it. Based on the time and energy I placed into writing, editing, and conceptualizing the paper, I expected to receive an A on it. My hard work did indeed pay off and I did receive an A on this piece. I think what makes me a writer is the fact that receiving an A on this paper did not lead me to put this paper away in the archives never to be looked at again. I have spent time reanalyzing this piece because this paper was not just about a grade, but also about an issue I hope to someday help mitigate.