

ANGEL ECHAVARRIA CASE TIMELINE

- 1992-1996** The Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers calls and writes to Charles H. Robson, who will later become Echavarria's trial attorney, regarding ethical complaints against him. Robson does not respond to 20 letters from the Bar.
- 1994**
- Jan. 7 Daniel Rodriguez is murdered around 7:30 p.m. at 501 Washington St. in Lynn, Mass. His brother, Isidoro, who claims to have been present when the crime took place, is interviewed at the scene and tells police that the assailants were two Puerto Rican males in their early 20s, one lighter-skinned and one darker-skinned. Isidoro is taken to the Lynn Police station and is shown six or seven mug books containing more than 600 photographs of Hispanic males. Isidoro singles out the mug shot of Mariano Bonifacio as looking like the lighter-skinned assailant.
- Jan. 14 Police show Isidoro a nine-photo array containing a more recent mug shot of Mariano Bonifacio. Isidoro again singles out Bonifacio's photo as looking like the lighter-skinned assailant. Police do not investigate Bonifacio further. Unbeknown to the defense until after Echavarria's conviction, Bonifacio had been arrested for allegedly shooting another man in Lynn two months earlier. The victim identified Bonifacio in a photo array as his assailant. Charges were never formally filed against Bonifacio, and he was released.
- Jan. 16 Isidoro Rodriguez sees Angel Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez (no relation) at a barbershop and then at a restaurant, both in Lynn. He claims to recognize them as the men who murdered his brother. He alerts the police, who confront Angel and Juan before letting them go.
- Jan. 17 Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez are arrested for the murder of Daniel Rodriguez.
- Feb. 18 Lynn police show Isidoro Rodriguez two photo arrays: one containing Echavarria's photo and one containing Juan Rodriguez's photo. Isidoro picks both of their photos out of the arrays.
- Mar. 7 Isidoro picks Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez out of separate lineups conducted at Middleton Jail.
- Aug. 22 Isidoro testifies against Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez in a Probable Cause Hearing.
- Sept. 7 Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez are indicted by an Essex County grand jury for the murder of Daniel Rodriguez. Massachusetts State Police Sgt. John Garvin testifies.
- Oct. 12 Echavarria pleads not guilty to the murder of Daniel Rodriguez.

1995

- Jan. 12 Echavarria files a motion for a speedy trial.
- Jan. 18 Mass. Police Sgt. John Garvin and Lynn Police Lt. J. Michael Roach question Gary Sevinor, who is incarcerated at Middleton Jail, regarding his knowledge of the year-old shooting of Daniel Rodriguez.
- Feb. 2 Echavarria files a motion to dismiss the charges against him based on insufficient evidence and due to the state's failure to try him within a year of the return date of his indictment.
- Feb. 20 Garvin shows Sevinor an 8-person photo array while he is incarcerated at the Northeastern Correctional Center in Concord (also known as Concord Farm). Sevinor singles out Echavarria's photo and writes on the photo array that he "couldn't swear" that Echavarria was one of the assailants. He is shown an array with Juan Rodriguez's photo, but fails to identify anyone.
- Mar. 13 Robert E. Pino, a chemist at the Massachusetts State Crime Laboratory, completes a report documenting the analysis of various items found at the crime scene.

1996

- Jan. 11 Jury trial begins. Echavarria and Juan Rodriguez are tried concurrently but represented by different attorneys. Echavarria is represented by Charles H. Robson; J. Rodriguez is represented by Ron Segal.
- Jan. 26 The jury returns guilty verdicts for Echavarria and co-defendant Juan Rodriguez. Rodriguez's verdict is immediately thrown out by Judge Charles Grabau, who cites a lack of evidence. Echavarria is sentenced to life in prison.
- June 4 The Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers files formal charges against Angel's attorney Charles H. Robson. These charges include six counts of ethical violations, including using his clients' money for personal use and failing to investigate his cases rigorously.

1997

- Apr. 8 Robson is suspended from the Massachusetts Bar.

1998

- Nov. 3 Attorney Robert Carnes argues Echavarria's first appeal.
- Dec. 22 Echavarria's first appeal is denied by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

2000

- Aug. 9 A non-native English speaker, Echavarria has someone write a letter to the New England Innocence Project (NEIP) on his behalf asking that it take on his case. At the time, NEIP only takes on cases in which DNA testing can be

performed—the first exoneration by touch DNA testing, like that performed in Echavarria’s case in 2010, will not happen for another eight years. At the time Echavarria writes his letter to NEIP, it is thought that his case has no DNA to test.

- 2004** Florence Graves founds the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University, named for philanthropists Elaine and Gerald Schuster.
- 2005**
Nov. 15 Echavarria authorizes the New England Innocence Project to release his case file to the Justice Brandeis Law Project (JBLP) at the Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism at Brandeis University, which looks to investigate cases of likely wrongful conviction that lack DNA evidence. JBLP begins investigating his case.
- 2008**
Nov. 15 The Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) assigns attorney Leslie O’Brien to Echavarria’s case.
- 2010** DNA testing of the phone cords purportedly used by the shooter to tie up the witnesses of the shooting identifies at least two unknown contributors. Echavarria is excluded as a contributor.
- 2014**
October The National Academy of Sciences releases a report recommending an overhaul of police departments’ eyewitness identification procedures.
- Dec. 18-19 An evidentiary hearing is held regarding Echavarria’s motion for a new trial. Among those who testify are the case’s police investigators; prosecuting attorney Kevin Mitchell; Robson; and experts on Puerto Rican versus Dominican Spanish, DNA, and eyewitness identification. Echavarria testifies on his own behalf for the first time.
- 2015**
Mar. 6 Final oral arguments on motion for a new trial.
- Apr. 30 Judge David A. Lowy allows Echavarria’s motion for a new trial, citing ineffective assistance of trial counsel.
- May 18 Echavarria freed at bail hearing scheduled held at Essex County Superior Court in Salem. Judge Lowy vacates the murder conviction.
- June 1 Deadline for appeal to April 30 decision passes; prosecutors elect not to appeal.
- June 15 The Essex County District Attorney’s Office announces that it will not retry Echavarria. The D.A. dismisses all charges and Echavarria is exonerated.