NORTHERN CALIFORNIA Innocence Project

## NCIP Client Jason Moore Conviction Vacated by Court of Appeal

### *Wrongfully imprisoned for nearly 16 years for his daughter's accidental death, Moore remains incarcerated pending DA's decision to re-try case*

**SANTA CLARA, Calif.**, September 14, 2026 — The conviction of Jason Moore, a 47-year-old Riverside County man, was recently vacated by the California Court of Appeal after the Court found that Moore's 2014 conviction rested upon false medical testimony. Moore was convicted for the death of his infant daughter, Charlotte, and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison. Moore, a gentle and loving father, insisted he would never have intentionally harmed his daughter, a fact the Court's opinion highlighted.

In the opinion, the Court noted that his partner Laura Morales' testimony portrayed him "as a devoted stay-at-home father to Charlotte and Morales' two children" and that "there is *no* evidence Moore abused Charlotte on any other occasion… nor was there any sign of other injury to Charlotte's body from this incident that was suggestive of abuse. Her only injuries were to her head, which, as we explained, new medical data shows could have been caused by a fall from the bed, even if such an event is exceptionally rare."

**Broader Implications for SBS/AHT Cases**

The Court of Appeal opinion sets an important precedent, as the Northern California Innocence project (NCIP) has found an alarming number of cases of likely wrongful convictions of parents accused of harming children whose injuries could be attributed to other causes, such as accidental short-distance falls or genetic issues. Such Shaken Baby Syndrome or Abusive Head Trauma (SBS/AHT) convictions were aided by faulty science asserted by medical professionals who testified unequivocally that certain medical findings were dispositive on the issue of guilt. As the opinion in Moore's case noted, science has since has begun to catch up with the facts in such cases, and the court held that the original trial testimony was false because it is contrary to current scientific understanding and was essential to the experts' opinions that Moore had abused his daughter.

"The Court of Appeal opinion is extremely significant for its clear recognition that developments in medical science can establish that expert testimony presented at trial was fundamentally false, not merely that experts may have reached different conclusions," said NCIP Executive Director Todd Fries. "This is the first published California appellate decision to meaningfully examine the evolving science surrounding pediatric short falls, and it provides important guidance for courts reviewing convictions that rest on medical testimony that is no longer supported by the scientific evidence."

**Conviction Built on Flawed Medical Science**

Jason Moore was arrested in 2010 after his three-and-a-half month old daughter, Charlotte, was found unresponsive on the floor next to her parents' bed. A jury convicted him after hearing expert testimony that Charlotte's injuries were not consistent with a short fall from the bed, and that absent a motor vehicle accident or multi-story fall, the only medically possible cause of her death was abuse from violent shaking and blunt head trauma.

The Court's decision noted that all three of the prosecution's experts testified that Moore's daughter's injuries were inconsistent with the short fall he described and only consistent with abuse.

"We are so pleased that the Court of Appeal thoughtfully reexamined the facts of Jason's case, reviewed the scientific literature that now supports Jason's account of the tragic accident, and reversed his conviction since the evidence of his guilt was built upon a false premise based on flawed science," said NCIP Clinical Supervising Attorney Lauryn Barbosa Findley, lead attorney on Moore's case who has successfully brought forth numerous challenges to shaken-baby convictions. "Our office is steadfast in our belief in Jason's innocence. The Court's decision dismantles the prosecution's case and emphasizes the evidence that supports Jason's innocence. We will continue to advocate for Jason's immediate release and for dismissal of all charges."

In the intervening years since Moore's conviction in 2014, evidence-based medicine has scrutinized the evidentiary basis underlying SBS/AHT diagnoses and revealed that the same findings long considered diagnostic of abuse can have other causes, including: natural disease processes, infections, genetic conditions, or accidental falls of short distances. Since the time of Moore's trial, there have also been numerous case reports in peer reviewed medical literature that demonstrate short falls can and do result in devastating and fatal intracranial injuries like those Charlotte sustained.

NCIP began investigating Moore's case in September of 2020 and filed a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus in the Riverside County Superior Court in May of 2022. After multiple rounds of briefing, an evidentiary hearing was conducted in February of 2024. Moore's petition was denied by the Riverside County Superior Court. In June of 2025, NCIP filed a renewed petition in the Fourth District Court of Appeal.

**NCIP at the Forefront of Reexamining SBS/AHT Convictions**

Moore's case initially came to the attention of NCIP through a large-scale project launched in 2019 to identify and litigate wrongful convictions in California that were the product of unreliable medical evidence surrounding SBS/AHT. NCIP identified hundreds of convictions and found that many of them bear the hallmarks of a wrongful conviction based on new scientific evidence and has spent the past several years investigating and litigating these cases. Moore's case is

NCIP's third consecutive conviction reversal based on false evidence provided by prosecution experts in an SBS/AHT case.

Funding for NCIP's extensive work in SBS/AHT research and litigation was provided as part of the U.S. Department of Justice's Upholding Rule of Law and Preventing Wrongful Convictions Program, in addition to funding from an Equal Justice Works Fellowship sponsored by Fenwick & West, LLP.

**About the Northern California Innocence Project (NCIP)**
NCIP is a non-profit clinical program of Santa Clara University School of Law whose mission is to promote a fair, effective, and compassionate criminal justice system and protect the rights of the innocent. Since its inception in 2001, NCIP has processed over ten thousand requests for inmate assistance, investigated hundreds of cases, pursued litigation or collaborative resolution in dozens, and obtained the freedom of 38 wrongfully convicted people. Learn more at www.ncip.org.

**Media Contact**
Carla Spain | NCIP External Relations | (510) 725-1572 | cspain@scu.edu

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