

'FINAL APPEAL,' A NEW TRUE CRIME INVESTIGATIVE SERIES, EXAMINES POTENTIAL WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

BY **TIM MARCIN** ON 1/23/18 AT 1:39 PM

SHARE



CULTURE

FINAL APPEAL

WRONGFUL CONVICTIONS

Brian Banks spent half a decade behind bars because of a wrongful conviction. Now he's trying to help others who might be suffering the same fate. Banks and former Los Angeles District Attorney's Office prosecutor Loni Coombs are the stars of Oxygen network's *Final Appeal*, which will wrap up its four-episode first season on Sunday.

"I can give voice to people who, for the entire time they've been in prison, felt that they've had no voice," Banks told *Newsweek*. "And I know that because I've been that person in prison who felt voiceless. I've screamed, I've pled, I've cried, I've begged. It falls on deaf ears once those bars have been slammed in front of you... your voice becomes mute."

SIGN IN **SUBSCRIBE** 

41 years in prison, he was advised to take a plea deal and spent five years behind bars. Five years after that, in 2012, the 26-year-old Banks was exonerated.

He has brought that experience to *Final Appeal*, which looks at the cases of four individuals who were convicted of killing someone but have also persisted for years in claiming their innocence. To be clear: Neither Banks nor Coombs—who spent nearly two decades as a prosecutor—serve as advocates for the imprisoned subjects of the show. Instead, the idea, simply, is to reexamine the cases. "Sometimes all it takes is fresh eyes," Banks said.

Final Appeal is a part of a true crime genre that's enjoying a boom moment, from with the massively successful Netflix show *Making A Murderer* to the podcast *Serial* and even the hit Netflix parody *American Vandal*.





Pictured are Brian Banks (left) and Loni Coombs of the show "Final Appeal."

Banks brings a personal connection to wrongful convictions But Coombs, his co-star, contributes in-depth knowledge of how cases should work and is able to spot problems in an investigation.

In one episode, for instance, Coombs and Banks uncover a key piece of evidence that was thought to be lost. The set of stained pajamas were tucked away in a storage locker and could potentially help exonerate a woman convicted of killing her husband. The clothing could prove a sexual assault took place, which the woman had long claimed happened. "I cannot tell you how huge that is," Coombs told *Newsweek*. "Now the defense has that to take for DNA testing."

Coombs said it was once commonly believed that wrongful convictions were incredibly rare, which skewed the justice system toward keeping rulings and sentences in place. But with advances in DNA testing, it has become clearer that there are likely far more people behind bars who shouldn't be than we might think.

That's why, she says, it's important to listen to people who claim they were wrongfully convicted. Even one innocent person spending time in jail is too many.

"Everybody has to open up their eyes—prosecutors, defense, our society—and say, 'Look there's problems here,'" Coombs said. "We need at the very least to fix the review process, to change it, to make it fair. It should not be an insurmountable hurdle."

REQUEST REPRINT OR **SUBMIT CORRECTION**

Promoted Links

Ads by Revcontent 

**Ever Googled Yourself?
Do a "Deep Search"
Instead!**

Truthfinder

**Which Pot Stock Offers
the Highest Upside?**

Wall Street News

**Md: Do This
Immediately if You Have
Diabetes (It Works)**

Vedda Blood Sugar

**California Residents in
Credit Card Debt in for a
Surprise**

DebtSlice

**Top 15 Stars Who Are
Much Older Than You
Thought**

POP Hits

**Here's What New Dental
Implants Should Cost
You**

SaveOnDentalImplant

**7 Times Lotto Winner:
Do This Every Time You
Buy a Lotto Ticket**

Latest Money Tips

**The One Thing All
Cheaters Have in
Common**

TruthFinder

Newsweek

© 2018 NEWSWEEK LLC



[About Us](#) [Corrections](#) [Contact Us](#) [Newsweek Media Group](#) [Travel](#) [Advertise](#) [Copyright](#) [Privacy Policy](#)
[Terms of Service](#) [Terms of Sale](#) [Archive](#)