

The Dreyfus Affair: The File the Defense Could Not See

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A French officer was convicted using secret and forged evidence, then imprisoned far from home. The effort to defend that verdict exposed an institutional cover-up strengthened by antisemitism and fear of disgrace.

STATUS	Documented wrongful conviction, forged evidence and cover-up
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	France and Devil's Island, French Guiana
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Secrets & conspiracies
STORY HISTORY	1894-1906

THE ACCOUNT

In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus faced a treason case whose most dangerous papers his lawyer was not allowed to examine. The French Jewish officer was convicted and sent to Devil's Island. The hidden file gave the proceedings the authority of secrets without the test of an open defense. Later evidence pointed elsewhere, but acknowledging it threatened more than the original verdict: it threatened the institutions that had insisted the case was settled.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum describes forged documents, false testimony and antisemitic prejudice in the conviction. When Georges Picquart investigated evidence implicating Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy, his superiors resisted and reassigned him. Public campaigning and reopened proceedings eventually led to Dreyfus's exoneration in 1906. The wrongful prosecution and efforts to sustain it are documented, not merely allegations that an adverse verdict must conceal a plot.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

The case turns secrecy into a practical mechanism of injustice. If the accused cannot see the evidence, the claim that it proves guilt becomes difficult to challenge. Its lasting force comes from the people who refused to let an institution's reputation outweigh a man's innocence-and from how long that insistence took to overcome the official story.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Alfred Dreyfus and the Dreyfus Affair

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/alfred-dreyfus-and-the-dreyfus-affair>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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<https://u225x.com/record/STR-SECRET-028>
