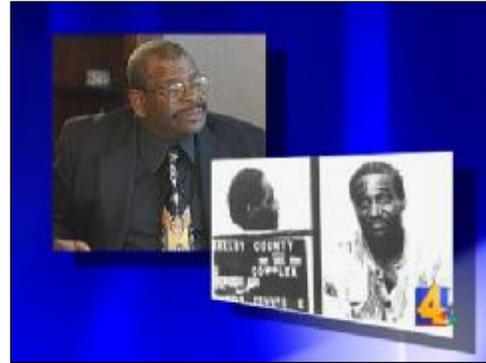


# Mistaken Identity Costs Local Man Freedom

## *Robert Brooks Says He Told Police They Had Wrong Man*

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**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** -- A Nashville man said freedom is something he will never take lightly again. Ronald Brooks said it all started when he turned himself in last year on a misdemeanor charge of having a numbers ticket.



The Davidson County Sheriff's Department said they mixed him up with a man wanted on forgery charges in Memphis.

"I told them they had the wrong man," Brooks said. Channel 4 News discovered that the sheriff's department would have known the mistaken identity if they had compared the two sets of fingerprints or looked at the mug shots.

"You look at that mug shot, ain't no way. I hate to say it like this, but all black people don't look alike," Brooks said. Brooks said he was shackled, handcuffed and driven to the Memphis jail.

The Memphis jailers finally realized the mistake and released Brooks.

"He said, 'I got your release papers right here. You're the wrong man.' And I said, 'Thank you, Jesus. I told ya'll, that you had the wrong man,'" Brooks said.

He said he was sick for going two days without medicine for his diabetes and had to borrow money to take a bus back to Nashville. "It could happen to any of us," said Brooks' attorney David Raybin.

Raybin has filed a lawsuit, he said, because the sheriff's department should do more to make sure they have the right man, especially since identity theft is so prevalent.

"He could have had a heart attack. He could have had a convulsion, he could have died," Raybin said.

The Memphis man police had confused Brooks with is a man wanted on forgery charges in Memphis.

The sheriff's department said they won't comment because of the lawsuit but they did release a copy of their standard operating procedures for verifying identities.

The procedure revealed nothing specific about matching fingerprints before shipping someone out.

"It was just awful and I don't want anyone to ever go through this," Brooks' wife said.

Recently, a Vanderbilt employee was jailed for three weeks, and then flown to Maryland, where authorities found they had the wrong man.