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## Bulger killers win freedom



**Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, now aged 18, have spent eight years in secure accommodation for the murder of two-year-old James Bulger in 1993. They have been freed on life licences.**

**Below, BBC News Online looks back at the sequence of events surrounding the case.**

### 23 June 2001

The Manchester Evening News is in talks with the Attorney General after it published information on the whereabouts of Robert Thompson and Jon Venables. The BBC's John Thorne reports.



[Click here to watch](#)

### 22 June 2001

The killers of James Bulger have been released on life licences by the Parole Board. Robert Thompson and Jon Venables have been given new, secret identities.



The BBC's Margaret Gilmore reports on the decision to free the killers

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### The parole controversy

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Political row  
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Killers win freedom

### Analysis

Cost of hiding killers  
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Perspectives: The Bulger release

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Public grief and anger  
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A parent's nightmare

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New challenge excites Venables

 The BBC's Jane Peel looks at the background to the case

Judge urges life sentence shake-up

 Liverpool Echo editor Mark Dickinson: "In a poll conducted by our paper 35,000 thought it was too early to release them"

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### 18 June 2001

Protesters demonstrate outside the Parole Board headquarters in London against the expected decision to free the killers of James Bulger. Jon Venables' case was the first to be heard, taking place at a secret location.



Protesters at the parole hearing

 The BBC's Jane Peel reports: 56k

### 26 October 2000

Jon Venables and Robert Thompson could be freed within months after the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Woolf, ruled the process of parole could begin immediately. His decision provokes stiff opposition from many people on Merseyside.



Lord Chief Justice, Lord Woolf

 The BBC's Jane Peel reports: 56k

### 16 December 1999

The Home Secretary Jack Straw has promised changes to the way juveniles are prosecuted after the European Court of Human Rights ruling on the Bulger case. The Strasbourg judges decided that the killers of Merseyside toddler James Bulger did not receive a fair trial.





🇬🇧 Joshua Rozenberg reports: 56k

Judge Julius Wildhaber of the European Court of Human Rights

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## 24 November 1993

Thompson and Venables are named by the presiding Judge, Mr Justice Morland, after a jury convicts them of murdering James Bulger. As well as losing their anonymity the boys, both aged 10, are sentenced to secure youth accommodation with a recommendation they serve at least eight years.



Anger outside the court as Venables and Thompson are driven away

🇬🇧 Polly Toynbee reports: 56k

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## 12 February 1993

The murder of two-year-old James Bulger, who was abducted from a busy shopping centre in Bootle, on Merseyside, leaves the whole country in shock. Detectives investigating the killing say he was horrifically murdered. His body was found on a railway line two miles from where his mother last saw him.



The toddler's body was found on a railway track

🇬🇧 The BBC's Paul Newman reports: 56k

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