

## NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY NEWS

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### JUDGE OVERTURNS 1980 MURDER CONVICTION OF DANIEL ANDERSEN

New DNA results deemed “extraordinarily compelling” evidence

CHICAGO -- After spending nearly 28 years in prison, Daniel Andersen, now 54, a joint client of [Northwestern University School of Law's Center on Wrongful Convictions of Youth](#) and the [Exoneration Project](#), has had his convictions for murder and attempted rape overturned. Cook County Circuit Court Judge Alfredo Maldonado vacated Andersen's convictions based on new DNA evidence that he called “extraordinarily compelling.”

Andersen's conviction stemmed from the homicide of Cathy Trunko, a young woman from Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood, who was found stabbed to death on the 4900 block of South Paulina Street on Jan. 19, 1980. Police believed a bloody knife found two days after her stabbing in a neighbor's yard was the murder weapon.

Andersen was 19, sleep deprived and drunk when he confessed to killing Trunko with this bloody knife after 16 hours of police interrogation. At trial, prosecutors said the blood type on the knife matched Trunko's and argued that Andersen's confession to killing Trunko with that very knife proved his guilt. He was convicted by a jury and sentenced to 55 years in prison.

The new DNA results prove that the bloody knife was not the murder weapon and that Andersen's confession was false and wholly unreliable. DNA testing on the knife showed that neither Trunko's blood nor Andersen's DNA was on the knife, proving it was not the murder weapon after all. As Judge Maldonado concluded, “the knife was the lynchpin of the State's case against” Andersen. Without it, Andersen's attorneys say there is absolutely no physical evidence linking Andersen to this crime.

Additional testing showed that the victim had the DNA of two male underneath her fingernails, both of which excluded Andersen. This fingernail DNA evidence is truly exculpatory because the evidence indicates that Trunko defended herself against her attacker and that at least one, if not both, of these DNA profiles belong to her assailant(s).

Andersen spent 27-1/2 years in prison until his release in 2007. Despite being out of prison for eight years, Andersen has been required to register as a sex offender. His lengthy prison sentence and murder and sex offense convictions have greatly inhibited his ability to find employment, housing and move on with his life, his attorneys said. He has continued to fight to clear his name

in the eight years since his release. Yesterday's ruling overturning his conviction represents a huge step toward doing so, according to his attorneys.

Andersen is represented by Megan Crane, Laura Nirider and Steven Drizin, attorneys from Northwestern Law's Center on Wrongful Conviction of Youth, and Joshua Tepfer of the Exoneration Project at the University of Chicago.

NORTHWESTERN NEWS: [www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/](http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/)

## **FOR EDITORS/WRITERS**

### **EDITING PROCEDURE:**

1. Give Pat first draft for big-picture editing.
2. Incorporate Pat's edits and carefully proof the edited story.
3. Send story to professor/source and be sure to BCC Bob on this correspondence.
4. When you get edits back, incorporate them; proof the story and then give it to an editor for a final proofread.
5. After the story has been approved by the source and copyedited, email the release to both Bob and Pat to indicate the final story is in "draft" and ready to get one last read from Bob or Pat (whoever is available); then Bob or Pat will proof the story, move it to "publish" and let the writer know. (If A/F is processing the release, the writer needs to let them know it is ready to be processed and whether they need to both publish the story and send it to media through VOCUS).
6. Only one version of the story should be on the Media Server — whether in "draft" or "publish" — at all times. When Pat (or Bob) adds EDIT to a story slug to indicate that the story has been edited, the writer's original story will be thrown in "trash." And in general, writers must make sure that only one copy of the story is on the Media Server — whether in "draft" or "publish" — at all times.
7. Whoever publishes a story in the CMS system needs to also mark the Microsoft Word story in the "publish" folder on the Media Server in red; if the story (such as a media advisory) has been sent to media through VOCUS but not published in the CMS system, the Microsoft Word story in the "publish" folder needs to be marked in blue.
8. When the story is published, the writer should email Steve and let him know.

Proofread by: JD

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