

**Boone County judge makes new ruling in the case of 1990 Chillicothe murder**

**News**

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A Missouri judge ruled on Tuesday that a Chillicothe man, twice convicted in the 1990 slaying of a farm wife, was the victim of a "manifest injustice" and that no jury would have convicted him had "investigators done their job". Boone County Circuit Court Judge Gary Oxenhandler, who was appointed by the Missouri Supreme Court to review the case, said prosecutors failed to turn over key evidence to Mark Woodworth's lawyers and overlooked numerous conflicts of interest among prosecutors, a judge, and law enforcement.

Woodworth was 16 when his neighbor, Cathy Robertson, was fatally shot as she slept in her rural home in Chillicothe. He was charged nearly three years later, with prosecutors basing their case on a single fingerprint found on an ammunition box inside the Robertson shed and a common manufacturing defect in his father's handgun.

Woodworth, whose father farmed with Mrs. Robertson's husband, was sentenced to life in prison. He is now 37 years old and is being held at the Crossroads Correctional Center in Cameron. Woodworth is appealing the sentence he received in 1999 for the 1990 murder of 41-year old Cathy Robertson and for the shooting of her husband, Lyndel.

Bob Ramsey, Woodworth's attorney who is quoted by the Associated Press, indicated he would petition the Supreme Court to have Woodworth freed on bond while justices decide how to proceed. In summarizing a 35-page ruling culminating his work since a week-long hearing last June, Judge Oxenhandler recommends the convictions be set aside, but giving the Supreme Court the final say.

A spokeswoman for the Missouri Attorney General's Office, which is handling the Woodworth case, said the agency is reviewing the decision. The state has 30 days to file a response.