



DenverDA

Mitchell R. Morrissey, District Attorney - Second Judicial District
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80202

Bus. Phone: 720-913-9000
Fax: 720-913-9035



DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Gerald R. Whitman, Chief of Police

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

March 30, 2010

Contact: Lynn Kimbrough, 720-913-9025 or Sonny Jackson, 720-913-6534

MAN CHARGED IN '80 COLD CASE MURDER

Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey has formally charged a man today who is accused of murdering a young woman in October 1980. The charges are the result of work by Denver's Cold Case Review Project and the Denver Police Department Crime Lab. Charges were filed today as a necessary step in the extradition process.

Roderick Elias (dob: 09-16-56) is charged with *first-degree murder after deliberation* (F1) and *first-degree felony murder* (F1).

On October 28, 1980, the Denver Police Department responded to the 3800 block alley between Oneida and Olive Streets where the body of a woman was found in a car. The victim was later identified as 22-year-old Kristen Swanson; the coroner determined that she had died from a single stab wound to the heart. The charges allege that Elias sexually assaulted and then murdered Swanson in the early morning hours of October 28, 1980. A man matching Elias's description had been seen leaning into the car just outside of the disco club Summerfield's, where Swanson worked, the night before she was murdered.

The case remained unsolved until Denver DA Mitch Morrissey requested a Cold Case review at the urging of a friend of the victim. A DNA profile was obtained by additional testing of several pieces of evidence in the case and the Cold Case Review Team was notified of a match that helped lead to the identification and arrest of Elias. He was taken into custody earlier today in Topeka, Kansas. Court dates will be scheduled following the extradition process.

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The Cold Case Review Project is a collaborative effort of the Denver Police Department, Denver Police Crime Lab, and the Denver District Attorney's Office.

The filing of a criminal charge is merely a formal accusation that an individual(s) committed a crime(s) under Colorado laws. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. *See Colo. RPC 3.6*