



# DenverDA

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **MAN CONVICTED IN '80 COLD CASE MURDER**

A man accused of murdering a young woman in October 1980 has been found guilty today by a Denver jury. The conviction is the result of work by Denver's Cold Case Review Project and the Denver Police Department Crime Lab as well as the two prosecutors who led the two-week long jury trial, Chief Deputy District Attorney Dawn Weber and Chief Deputy District Attorney Julie Hamel.

**Roderick Elias** (dob: 09-16-56) was convicted of *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 in March 2010. He was located and taken into custody in Topeka, Kansas.

He was sentenced immediately to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

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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.*