

Prosecutors fear DNA tests exonerating convicted felons years later

my client Jamie Peterson walked out of a jail in Kalkaska, exonerated by DNA after 17 years in prison for a murder and rape he did not commit.

The DNA testing not only excluded Peterson but matched another man, Jason Ryan, who will stand trial later this year.

I am thrilled that Peterson is finally free. But I am also angry that the previous Kalkaska County prosecutor, aided by a local judge, managed to prevent the DNA from being tested and the real perpetrator from being identified for 12 years, even though they knew the DNA did not match Peterson. For 12 long years, Peterson remained in prison and Jason Ryan remained free because the prosecutor did not want to know the truth.

Peterson was convicted of the 1996 rape and murder of Geraldine Montgomery even though the male DNA recovered from her rape kit did not match him.

At trial, prosecutor Brian Donnelly repeatedly insinuated that another stain found on Montgomery's shirt would match Peterson if it could only be tested. Since none of the physical evidence matched Peterson, he was convicted entirely on a series of wildly inconsistent confessions he had made to the police, who knew that he was mentally ill.

By 2001, DNA testing had improved to the point that the stain on the shirt could be tested. Further, the CODIS system had come online so that the unknown male DNA from the rape kit could be compared to state and national databases of thousands of convicted felons.

Read full original article: [On DNA, prosecutors can't handle the truth](#)