

MICHAEL MORTON: A TIMELINE

Christine Morton is murdered at 9114 Hazelhurst Drive in Austin.

AUG 13 1986

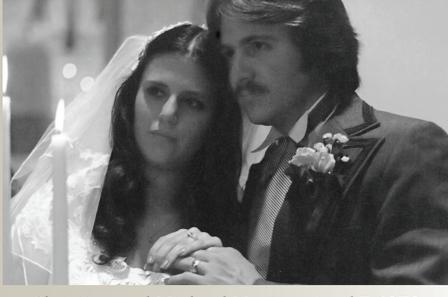
Christine Morton's brother, John Kirkpatrick, finds a blood-stained blue bandana near the crime scene and gives it to Williamson County detectives.

AUG 14 1986

Neighbors tell Williamson County investigators they have seen a man in a green van parked near the Morton home several times. They say he gets out of the van and walks into the woods behind their home.

The Jewel Box store in San Antonio reports to the Williamson County Sheriff's Office that someone appeared to have fraudulently used Christine Morton's credit card.

AUG 15 1986



Christine and Michael Morton: April 7, 1979

Rita Kirkpatrick, Christine Morton's mother, tells Williamson County sheriffs Sgt. Don Wood that 3-year-old Eric Morton saw the brutal attack on his mother. Eric describes a "monster" with red gloves and a big mustache and says the man was not his father.

AUG 24 1986

Judge William Lott orders Williamson County District Attorney Ken Anderson to provide all of Wood's investigative reports on the Morton murder to him for in-camera inspection to determine whether the file contains any information that could help Morton prove his innocence. Lott determines there is nothing exculpatory in the file and orders it sealed.

FEB 06 1987

John Cross sends Wood copies of a canceled check he had given to Christine Morton before her death. It was cashed after the murder with a forged signature. Family members believe Morton's purse was stolen during the incident, but in this report, the officer writes, "Course, we know better."

The trial begins. Morton argues that an intruder must have attacked and killed his wife after he left for work. Anderson argues that Morton beat his wife to death when she refused to have sex with him on the night of his 32nd birthday.

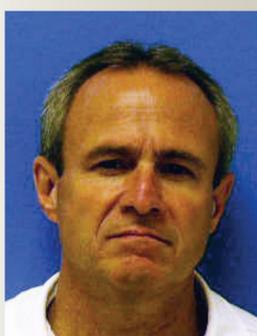
FEB 09 1987



Former Williamson County District Attorney Ken Anderson

The jury finds Michael Morton guilty. He is sentenced to life in prison.

FEB 17 1987



Michael Morton

Morton's lawyers request a new trial, citing a remark from Williamson County Assistant DA Mike Davis to the jurors regarding an inch-thick stack of police reports they never saw that could have sparked doubt about Morton's guilt. The motion is denied.

MAR 17 1987

Debra Masters Baker is beaten to death in her bed in her North Austin home just 12 miles from where Christine Morton was beaten to death in her bed.

JAN 13 1988

Morton files an application for a writ of habeas corpus and requests testing on bedsheets from the murder scene. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals grants the testing, which reveals Morton's semen. His application is denied.

MAR 22 1990

Anderson, the Williamson County DA, becomes a state district judge after being appointed to the bench by Gov. Rick Perry. Perry appoints Anderson's first assistant, John Bradley, as district attorney.

JAN 02 2002

Under Texas' post-conviction DNA law, Morton requests testing on several items from the crime scene, including the bandana and fingernail scrapings from Christine Morton and evidence from an unsolved murder near the Mortons' home.

FEB 11 2005

The trial court in Williamson County grants testing on some items, including the fingernail scrapings, but denies testing on the bandana and evidence from the other murder.

AUG 15 2006

Bradley tells the *Williamson County Sun* that DNA testing is not going to identify a "mystery killer."

AUG 11 2008

DNA tests ordered in August 2006 are inconclusive, and the court finds that Morton cannot be excluded as the murderer.

MAR 17 2008



Williamson County District Attorney John Bradley

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott orders Bradley to provide Morton's lawyers with the investigative documents regarding the Morton murder. Bradley objects, citing the ongoing litigation over DNA testing, which Bradley has also opposed. Morton's lawyers discover for the first time the Kirkpatrick transcript with Eric's description of his mother's murder along with police reports about Christine Morton's credit card and check being used fraudulently and neighbors' reports about the green van seen near the Morton home.

OCT 08 2008

Perry appoints Bradley chairman of the Texas Forensic Science Commission amid a heated debate over the arson science used to convict and execute Cameron Todd Willingham for the deaths of his three daughters.

SEP 30 2009



Cameron Todd Willingham

Bradley tells the *Houston Chronicle* that Morton's lawyers are "grasping at straws."

OCT 11 2009

The 3rd Court of Appeals in Austin allows DNA testing on the bandana.

JAN 08 2010

Bradley's term on the Forensic Science Commission ends after the Texas Senate fails to confirm his nomination.

MAY 31 2011

Orchid Cellmark, the forensic testing firm, issues a report that confirms biological material on the bandana belongs to Christine Morton and to another man who is not Michael Morton.

JUN 30 2011

After the man's DNA profile is uploaded to a national database, a hit is made, matching the DNA to that of Mark Alan Norwood, who was arrested in California in 2007.

AUG 19 2011

Innocence Project lawyer Nina Morrison and Houston lawyer John Raley meet with Austin Police Department cold case detectives to share information about Norwood. They had learned about the Baker murder on the APD coldcase website. At the time of the 1988 murder, Norwood lived less than a mile away from Baker's home.

AUG 24 2011

After Judge Billy Ray Stubblefield orders the file unsealed, Morton's lawyers discover that Anderson did not provide Lott with all of Sgt. Wood's reports as was ordered. The file contains six pages of preliminary reports; it excludes the Kirkpatrick phone transcript, the reports on the use of Christine Morton's credit and forged check and the neighbors' reports about the man in the green van.

AUG 26 2011



Michael Morton in court with his lawyers on Oct. 4, the day he was released from prison.

Travis County DA Rosemary Lehmborg sends a fax report to Judge Sid Harle, who was appointed to preside over the Morton case after Stubblefield recused himself, explaining that the DNA profile of Norwood found on the bandana matches DNA found on a hair at the scene of the Baker murder.

SEP 16 2011

Harle conducts a status hearing and informs Morton's lawyers of the DNA match to the Baker case. Morton's lawyers, in a closed hearing, argue that he be released as soon as possible. Williamson County prosecutors object, arguing that they need more time to review the evidence and put on a full hearing. "I'm still waiting for them to come to grips," a frustrated Morrison tells the judge. "I mean, I know this is a bombshell."

SEP 26 2011

Bradley signs an agreement with the Innocence Project to allow Morton's release from prison based on the DNA evidence and to allow lawyers to gather evidence to determine whether prosecutorial misconduct led to the wrongful conviction.

OCT 03 2011

Michael Morton is released from prison.

OCT 04 2011

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals declares Morton innocent.

OCT 12 2011



Michael Morton with his mother, Pat Morton

Bradley announces that Abbott's office will act as a special prosecutor in the Morton case.

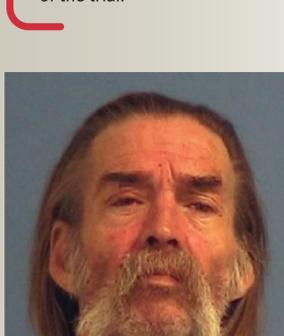
OCT 17 2011

Wood, in a deposition, tells Morton's lawyers that his extensive investigative file would have been known to Anderson, the Williamson County DA, at the time of the trial.

OCT 25 2011

Former Assistant Williamson County DA Mike Davis, in a deposition, tells Morton that Anderson was in charge of the Morton prosecution. "Any murder case was Ken Anderson's baby," Davis says.

OCT 29 2011



Mark Alan Norwood

Anderson gives sworn testimony about his role in the Morton prosecution.

OCT 31 2011

Police arrest Mark Alan Norwood in Bastrop, and he is charged with capital murder in connection with Christine Morton's 1986 death. Austin police say Norwood is also a suspect in the 1988 Baker murder.

NOV 09 2011