

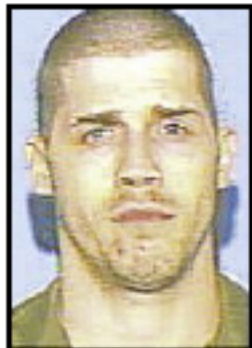
Ten years to convict the real killer

1998

June 2: Earl Mann escapes from Oriana House, a community-based correctional facility in Akron. He stays with Tonia Brasiel, his common-law wife, who lives at 116 W. Summit St. in Barberton.

June 7: Judith Johnson, 58, is found strangled, raped and with a broken neck in her home at 110 W. Summit St., Barberton. Her 6-year-old granddaughter is beaten and raped. Clarence Elkins, her son-in-law, is arrested at his Magnolia home and charged with the murder and assaults.

June 17: Mann is arrested in Coshocton. Upon release, he shaves his head.



Mann

June 18: Elkins is indicted on murder and rape charges. He says he was out drinking then was home in bed when the crimes occurred.

Oct. 2: A neighbor tells police Mann broke two windows at Brasiel's Summit Street home.

Dec. 18: Mann is arrested in Barberton for failure to appear on an assault charge.

1999

Jan. 4: Mann attacks an older man, robs him and flees.

Jan. 5: Mann attacks a man with a pool cue and steals his food. Mann's address is listed as 116 W. Summit St.

June 4: A jury convicts Elkins of murder, attempted aggravated murder, three counts of rape and felonious assault based on the testimony of his niece and witnesses who said Johnson feared him. No physical evidence links him to the crimes.

June 18: Elkins is sentenced to multiple life terms in prison.

July 8: Elkins files an appeal.

2000

Aug. 31: Mann is under investigation for raping three girls on Dec. 10, 1995; June 5, 1998 (two days before Johnson was found murdered); Oct. 2, 1998; and Jan. 4, 1999.

September: The 9th Ohio District Court of Appeals affirms the trial court judgment and rejects Elkins' appeal. Ohio Supreme Court refuses to consider the case.

October: Elkins family hires a private investigator.



Clarence Elkins unsuccessfully appeals his conviction in 2002.

2001

Jan. 1: Sherri Bevan Walsh becomes Summit County prosecutor.



Bevan Walsh

Jan. 20: The three girls tell investigators Mann raped them. The details are similar to how Johnson and her granddaughter were raped.

Dec. 6: Elkins' niece is hypnotized.

2002

January: Elkins' niece recants her testimony.

April 19: Mann is convicted for raping and molesting the three girls.

May 15: Elkins' lawyers petition judge to throw out the verdict or order a new trial, based partly on recanting. Lawyers identify another man as a suspect and ask the judge to order the man to submit to DNA tests. The judge denies motions to collect hair samples and conduct DNA testing.

Dec. 9: Elkins is denied a new trial.

2003

June: Elkins' wife begins raising the \$20,000 to test the DNA of

a Barberton man she believes committed the crime.

Aug. 27: The 9th Ohio District Court of Appeals rejects Elkins' appeal for a new trial.

2004

Spring: Ohio Innocence Project begins work on Elkins' case.

Dec. 1: The DNA does not match the Barberton man who had been identified as a possible suspect. Elkins seeks a new trial based on the DNA evidence that shows another man committed the crime.

2005

Early in year: Mann is transferred to Elkins' cell block. Elkins' wife and a private investigator identify Mann as a suspect.

July 14: Elkins is again denied a new trial.

Sept. 23: Elkins' lawyers announce that DNA from the crime scene matches Earl Mann, who lived two doors down from Johnson. Elkins obtained a DNA sample from Mann by picking up the butt of a cigarette Mann had smoked.

Oct. 28: Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro, who is running for governor, says Elkins should be set free.



Petro

Dec. 15: Bevan Walsh petitions to vacate Elkins' conviction and dismiss all charges. Elkins is a free man for the first time since his arrest in 1998.

2007

June 29: Mann is indicted for the rapes and murder.

2008

Aug. 18: Mann pleads guilty and is sentenced to 55 years to life.



Mann at his sentencing hearing for the crimes.

Dec. 15, 2005: Clarence Elkins is greeted by his wife, Melinda, and his son, Clarence Jr., following his release from the Mansfield Correctional Facility, where he served more than seven years for crimes he did not commit. The Elkinses subsequently divorced.

