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Judge Denies Motion for New Trial for Douglas Prade

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, March 11, 2016) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Christine Croce has denied Douglas Prade's motion for a new trial.

In issuing her ruling, Judge Croce determined the "overwhelming circumstantial evidence" in this case pointed to Douglas Prade. Judge Croce added the new DNA test results were most likely the result of incidental transfer and/or contamination.

Judge Croce restated the Ninth District Court of Appeals finding that "the picture painted by that evidence was one of an abusive, domineering husband who became accustomed to a certain standard of living and who spiraled out of control after his successful wife finally divorced him, forced him out of the house, found happiness with another man, and threatened his dwindling finances."

"In this case there was overwhelming evidence that Douglas Prade stalked and terrorized Margo Prade prior to killing her. Judge Croce agreed that the DNA found on Margo's lab coat was unreliable and meaningless," said Prosecutor Walsh. "For the past 19 years, Doug Prade has tried to find one way or another out of prison. It's time for him to accept the jury's verdict and take responsibility."

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Dr. Margo Prade was found shot to death in her minivan outside her medical practice in November 1997. Her husband, Akron Police Captain Douglas Prade, was convicted of her murder and sentenced to life in prison. In 2012, Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Judy Hunter overturned the 1998 conviction. Prade was released from prison, but then taken back into custody in 2014 when the Ninth District Court of Appeals ruled Judge Hunter's decision was wrong. The Ninth District also found Judge Hunter's granting of a "conditional" new trial was not proper. The case was returned to Summit County and assigned to Judge Christine Croce. Judge Croce held a hearing on November 4th, 2015 to review the evidence to determine if Prade should get a new trial.