

TIME LINE: THE MICHAEL PETERSON CASE

2001

Rudolf says the death came from an accidental fall.

July 14: A retired Durham police sergeant testifies that when he arrived at the scene of Kathleen Peterson's death, the amount of blood immediately made him suspicious.

Aug. 11: Brent Wolgamott, a former male escort, testifies that Mike Peterson arranged to pay him for sex three months before Kathleen Peterson's death.

Aug. 18: SBI agent Duane Deaver testifies that the blood spatters on the walls of the staircase, as well as the blood on Mike Peterson's shorts and sneakers, are evidence of a beating.

Aug. 22: Judge Orlando Hudson rules that evidence about the 1985 death of Mike Peterson's friend Elizabeth Ratliff in Germany is admissible.

Dec. 9: Kathleen Peterson, 48, is found dead in a back staircase at her mansion in Durham.

Dec. 20: Michael Peterson is indicted on a charge of first-degree murder in the death of his wife. Peterson says he discovered her body after she fell.

2002

Jan. 14: Peterson posts bail of \$850,000 and is released from the Durham County jail.

2003

May 5: Jury selection in the first-degree murder trial begins. It takes eight weeks to seat the 12 jurors and four alternates.

July 1: Durham District Attorney Jim Hardin says a blow poke, a fireplace tool, is likely the murder weapon. Defense attorney David

Sept. 4: Assistant medical examiner Deborah Radisch testifies that the lacerations on Kathleen Peterson's head were consistent with a beating, not a fall.

Sept. 15: Forensic expert Henry Lee testifies that the blood spatters at the death scene are consistent with a fall, not a beating.

Sept. 17: The defense displays drawings re-enacting an accidental fall that could have caused the injuries Kathleen Peterson suffered.

Sept. 23: Rudolf surprises the courtroom by offering a blow poke that he says was found in the Peterson house over the weekend.

Oct. 10: After 14 hours of deliberations over four days, the jury finds Peterson guilty of first-degree murder. Hudson sentences him to life in prison without parole. Rudolf immediately appeals.

2005

"The Staircase," produced by French documentary crew Maha films, airs on the Sundance Channel and later is named winner one of the 13 winners of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards.

2006

Henry Lee includes the Peterson case in his book "Dr. Henry Lee's Forensic Files."

April 18: Attorney Tom Maher argues before a three-judge panel at the state Court of Appeals for a new trial, saying that the trial judge should not have allowed evidence about Peterson's bisexuality and the death of Elizabeth Ratliff.

September: A majority of the three-judge panel rules against Peterson.

2007

November: The Supreme Court upholds conviction.

2008

Aug. 21: Peterson supporter Larry Pollard holds a news conference stating that an SBI report listing the presence of a microscopic feather supports the theory that an owl attacked Kathleen Peterson.

Nov. 12: New attorneys Jason J. Anthony and J. Burkhardt Beale allege that prosecutors withheld evidence about a tire iron found by a neighbor, suggesting that an intruder with a tire iron might have killed Kathleen Peterson.

2009

March 10: Judge Orlando Hudson rejects Peterson's appeal for a new hearing, saying he did not

think the outcome of the trial would have been different had the trial lawyers known about the tire iron.

2010

August: The N&O series "Agents' Secrets" questions SBI investigative tactics, including those used by Deaver. An audit ordered in the spring by Attorney General Roy Cooper finds more than 200 cases where official SBI lab reports did not reflect the results obtained in the lab. The most serious mistakes were contained in reports written by Deaver.

2011

February: Rudolf asks for a new trial because of the new information affecting Deaver's credibility.

Dec. 14: Hudson grants motion for new trial.