

Your long weekend long read

# David Milgaard - From conviction, to exoneration, to finding the real killer

By Lisa Joy

Staff Reporter  
News-Optimist / SASKTODAY.ca

Decades after David Milgaard's wrongful conviction, the question lingers: 'who is responsible?'

Right up to his death in May, David Milgaard wasn't satisfied with the results of Saskatchewan's public inquiry into his wrongful conviction and maintained there was a cover-up, which he said the inquiry failed to expose.

Milgaard spent almost 23 years in prison for the rape and murder of Saskatoon nursing assistant Gail Miller before DNA evidence exonerated him. Milgaard insisted that the Crown and police knew he was innocent but buried the truth to save themselves, their careers and their reputations.

"I believe the prosecutor himself somehow really knew what was going on in this situation and more for his own self-preservation than anything else, he decided to continue to suppress this information," Milgaard told SASKTODAY.ca in a phone interview in October 2021.

"Rather than bring out the truth about [Fisher] and free



David Milgaard in 2021 & prison (right). Photos supplied by David Milgaard



me from prison they suppressed the truth," said Milgaard. "It was terrible what they did to me."

Milgaard was exonerated after DNA evidence proved he didn't commit the crime and identified serial rapist Larry Fisher from North Battleford as the real killer.

### Milgaard wrongfully convicted of Gail Miller's murder

Just after dawn on Jan. 31, 1969, a schoolgirl discovered the lifeless body of 20-year-old Saskatoon nursing

assistant Gail Olena Miller face down in the snow in an alley behind 211 Avenue N South in Saskatoon's west side Pleasant Hill district. It was -42C and a thick greyish haze lingered in the bitterly cold air.

That fateful Friday morning, Gail Miller's life ended on her short one-and-a-half block walk from the boarding house where she lived at 130 Avenue O South, to catch a bus at the corner of 20th Street and Avenue O, on her way to work at Saskatoon City Hospital. She was

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## N.B. wanted man charged in Sask., Alta., seeks bail

By Lisa Joy

Staff Reporter

A North Battleford man who was wanted on warrants in Saskatchewan and Alberta is seeking bail.

Reagan Racette, 38, was arrested after Maidstone RCMP responded to a break and enter in the RM of Wilton south of Lloyd-

minster July 5.

According to police, a black car left the property and was last seen headed into Lloydminster. Another suspect was reported to be driving a side-by-side utility vehicle, which was found damaged and abandoned in a swamp in the R. M. of Wilton, and the suspect was on foot.

RCMP officers from Maidstone, Sask., Kitscoty and Vermillion, Alta., detachments secured the immediate area. The Lloydminster Rescue Squad was called in, as well as Cold Lake, Alta., RCMP Police Dog Services to locate the suspect. Three hours later Racette was arrested.

Racette was charged

with break and enter, flight from police, and possession of stolen property.

Maidstone RCMP say that at the time of his arrest, Racette was wanted on outstanding warrants out of Cut Knife, Sask., and Kitscoty, Alta., RCMP detachments for separate

investigations of break and enter, theft, and trespassing.

Police say the side-by-side utility trailer was reported stolen out of Vermillion, Alta.

Racette had a show cause hearing scheduled for July 21 and his hearing

has now been adjourned to Aug. 4. Show cause hearings are held to determine if the accused will be granted bail after the Crown opposes the accused's release. Details of what is said during bail hearings can't be published.

## More court delays for dangerous offender facing weapons charges

By Lisa Joy

Staff Reporter

Delays continue in the case against a 44-year-old North Battleford man accused of going to Onion Lake Cree Nation with a semi-automatic rifle and ammunition in a duffle bag.

Lega aid lawyer Cameron Schmunk, acting as agent for Brian Pfefferle, told the court that Robin Wuttunee's matter had just been farmed out to Pfefferle's office and they only received disclosure a week ago. Schmunk asked the

court for a three to four-week adjournment.

Judge Kim Young adjourned the matter to Aug. 3.

In June, Wuttunee's lawyer, Andrew Lyster, asked for, and was granted, leave to withdraw as defence for Wuttunee telling the court that it's a conflict for his office to represent him. Lyster said Wuttunee's case has "become somewhat complicated."

Wuttunee has been in custody since he was arrested July 17, 2021, on Onion Lake Cree Nation after the Nation's security

checkpoint allegedly found a semi-automatic rifle and ammunition in a bag belonging to Wuttunee.

At the time of his arrest, Wuttunee was wanted on multiple outstanding warrants out of Alberta and was prohibited from possessing firearms. Wuttunee is a court designated Dangerous Offender, according to the RCMP.

Wuttunee faces weapons and violence-related charges in provincial and Queen's Bench Courts. The charges against him haven't been proven in court.

## Sentencing delayed for accused in Tiki Laverdiere death

By Lisa Joy

Staff Reporter

The sentencing hearing for one of 25-year-old Tiki Laverdiere's accused killers was adjourned last Wednesday until Aug. 12.

In April, Shayla Orthner pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder and instead entered a guilty plea to the lesser offence of

manslaughter.

Laverdiere was reported missing to Battlefords RCMP on May 12, 2019. Soon RCMP announced Laverdiere's disappearance was the result of foul play and they would be investigating her disappearance as a homicide. On July 11, 2019, a police dog found Laverdiere's remains in a

rural area outside of North Battleford while RCMP were conducting a ground search.

Ten people were charged with Laverdiere's murder.

There is a ban on publication of all preliminary hearings, trials, and sentencing hearings until the trials of all the co-accused are concluded.

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