




INDICTMENT

2 former Cook County prosecutors indicted in connection to decades-old wrongful conviction case

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Two former Cook County prosecutors were indicted Wednesday in connection to a case of a man who spent decades in prison for a crime he did not commit.

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Two former Cook County prosecutors were indicted Wednesday in connection to a case of a man who spent decades in prison for a crime he did not commit.

The special prosecutor said Jackie Wilson never received a fair trial, but now, there is a historic turn of events more than 40 years since that original murder case.

For the first time ever, former Cook County prosecutors Andrew Horvat and Nick Trutenko are facing charges for misconduct in the wrongful conviction case.

Trutenko and Horvat are accused of various crimes connected to Wilson's trial, who was wrongfully convicted of murdering two Chicago police officers in 1982 -- which he served 36 years for.

"Jackie Wilson who was tried three times 1983, 1989 and 2020 and he never received a fair trial in any of those trials," said Special Prosecutor Lawrence Oliver II.

Former cook county prosecutors, Trutenko and Horvat, are facing charges of perjury, obstruction of justice, violations of the local records act and official misconduct, according to the 14 count indictment.

The indictment, handed down Wednesday, specifically points to the conflict of interest Trutenko had as lead prosecutor, alleging a friendship with William Coleman, who was a key witness in the second trial.

"From what happened in 2020, it was pretty clear what happened. The alleged perjury, the relationship with the informant -- Our scope was to find out how broad that misconduct was," Oliver said.

The indictment mentions Trutenko even traveling to the UK to become the godfather of Coleman's son at one point in 1992. This, as the conviction against Wilson was still pending.

Andrew Horvat is facing charges for his alleged misconduct when representing Trutenko in a Chicago police board hearing, specifically including an incident in 2020 when his client was taking the stand.

"Literally, right before he took the stand, Andrew Horvat went to the Special Prosecutor Larry Rosen and said, 'Do not ask Nick Trutenko about his relationship with William Coleman.' He said there was nothing illegal or unethical but it was just weird [and] that's not true -- it was both illegal and unethical," Oliver said.

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office is not included in this indictment.

We reached out to Jackie Wilson's attorneys but haven't heard back.

Arraignment for both of the men charged will happen in the next few weeks.

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office released a statement that said:

"Nick Trutenko was immediately fired as an Assistant State's Attorney based on his witness testimony in the prosecution of Jackie Wilson. Mr. Trutenko's actions dated back to his previous tenure in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) in the 1980s, and his subsequent testimony in the retrial of Mr. Wilson in 2020. Andrew Horvat was also subsequently fired in 2021. The CCSAO has reviewed all other cases where Mr. Trutenko has served as a notifier or documented witness statements and has found no other incidents of misconduct. The CCSAO takes allegations of misconduct seriously and, in the wake of this incident, has taken additional steps to improve and increase the ongoing training of staff. Over the last six years, under State's Attorney Foxx's leadership, the office has: Hired the Office's first Chief Ethics Officer; Hired the Office's first Equal Opportunity Officer; Overhauled the Employee Handbook and internal SharePoint site with updates that include: A stand-alone Ethics Policy; Updated Technology and social media rules; Language on preserving electronic and physical records; Offboarding of employees leaving the Office. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office will continue to work toward an office culture based on the shared behaviors, values, and attitudes for a more fair and equitable Cook County for all residents, and a positive environment that continues to be a premier destination for new and existing employees."

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