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Title: When jail is no alibi in murders
New evidence undercuts state case
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Early on a December morning in 1992, a 17-year-old gang member named Daniel Taylor sat in a windowless police interrogation room and confessed to a double murder committed two weeks earlier in the Uptown neighborhood.

With a detective, a prosecutor and a stenographer in the room, Taylor said he and seven other gang members met at Clarendon Park to plot the murders.

The eight of them, Taylor said, then walked a few blocks to a second-floor apartment on Agatite Avenue. Four waited on the street, acting as lookouts, while Taylor and three others went up to the apartment.

They broke down the door and demanded money from one of the tenants. When he refused, a gang member "shot the guy on the left side of his head, around the temple area," Taylor said in his confession. Then they turned their attention to a woman who lived in the apartment, grabbing her arms.

"Please don't, please don't," she pleaded, according to Taylor's confession.

Twenty-nine minutes after Taylor had begun, prosecutors had the evidence they would need to send him to prison for the rest of his life.

But the case built upon Taylor's confession, like others examined in a Tribune investigation, was not as airtight as it seemed.

Just as he was going to be formally charged with two counts of murder, Taylor protested to detectives that he could not have committed the crimes because he had been in police custody when they occurred.

Within days, police found an arrest report that showed Taylor was locked up for disorderly conduct at 6:45 p.m. on Nov. 16, the night of the murders. A copy of a bond slip showed he had not been released from the Town Hall District lockup until 10 p.m.

The murders occurred at 8:43 p.m., according to police.

But instead of releasing Taylor and questioning how he came to confess, detectives gathered evidence putting Taylor on the street when the murders occurred and casting doubt on his arrest records.

They found a witness--a drug dealer and rival gang member--who said he saw Taylor in Clarendon Park at 7:30 p.m. They found two police officers, Michael Berti and Sean Glinski, who then filed a report saying they emerged from an apartment a half-block from the murders after making a drug arrest and saw Taylor at 9:30 p.m.

The fact that a jury chose to believe Taylor's confession over the police records that documented his arrest and his time in the lockup illustrates the remarkable potency of confessions in the criminal justice system. Taylor's conviction also shows just how difficult it can be for a defendant to disavow his confession, even when he has an alibi supported not by relatives or friends, but by police records.

A Tribune investigation of Taylor's case has uncovered new evidence that supports Taylor's version of events and his contention that his confession was false.

The witness who put Taylor in the park now says he lied at the request of detectives, and later was rewarded with leniency on a narcotics charge.

Key portions of the chronology laid out by Berti and Glinski are undermined by recent interviews and records obtained by the Tribune.

And, the Tribune found that four months before Berti and Glinski wrote their report, a Cook County Circuit judge ordered Berti off the witness stand in an unrelated case and branded him a "liar."

"I didn't do this and they know it," Taylor, now 26, said in one of several interviews at Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet. "I was in jail when this happened. No way I could have committed those murders."

Police and prosecutors involved in Taylor's case declined to comment.

Two other Chicago men have presented the same alibi to refute murder confessions. Peter Williams confessed to murder in 1992--the same year as Taylor--but the charges against him were dropped when police verified that Williams was in jail when the crime occurred. Mario Hayes confessed in 1996, but he was acquitted three years later after producing records that showed he, too, had a jail alibi.

In the murder case that sent Taylor to prison, Chicago police charged eight people in all. Taylor and four others were convicted but the cases against the other three defendants fell apart. One was acquitted at trial and prosecutors dropped charges against the other two after their confessions were thrown out.

But Taylor's alibi raises troubling questions about all of the cases. That is because all the defendants confessed and each said Taylor was with them.

Agatite Avenue murders

Nine hundred and forty people were murdered in Chicago in 1992--more than any year since. Jeffrey Lassiter and Sharon Haugabook were only two of them. Their deaths, in a small second-floor apartment in a brick courtyard building, did not merit a mention in the daily newspapers.

The apartment, at 910 W. Agatite Ave., was rented by Lassiter, a crack-cocaine abuser with a string of arrests. Haugabook, another drug abuser who also had been arrested numerous times, including for prostitution, had recently moved in.

According to police reports and interviews, Lassiter had long allowed prostitutes from the neighborhood to bring customers to the apartment if the prostitutes paid him with cocaine.

Several weeks before the murders, Lassiter also allowed a West Side gang member named Dennis Mixon to use the apartment to sell cocaine, according to police reports and Mixon.

On Nov. 16, at 8:43 p.m., neighbors heard gunshots and called police. When detectives arrived, they found the front door broken in and Lassiter and Haugabook on the floor, both of them shot in the head at close range.

Lassiter, 41, was pronounced dead at the scene. Haugabook, 37, was taken to Illinois Masonic Hospital, where she died without regaining consciousness.

Police found no eyewitnesses to the shooting, but another building resident, Faye McCoy, told detectives that she looked out her window after she heard the shots and saw four men walking out. One of them, she said, pointed a finger at her in warning.

One of the first people detectives sought was Mixon, after a confidential informant told them that Mixon was involved in the murders, according to police reports.

Detectives showed Mixon's mug shot to McCoy, who identified him as one of the four men leaving the building that night. Mixon, police learned, also had been in "an altercation" with Lassiter a few weeks earlier over a VCR. Police were unable to locate him.

The murders were still unsolved two weeks later when, on Dec. 2, patrol officers spotted Lewis Gardner, 15, and Akia Phillips, 19, trying to sell drugs on a street corner and took them into custody.

During questioning, officers said Gardner, whose IQ of 70 indicated borderline mental retardation, told them that he got his drugs from Deon Patrick and that Patrick was involved in the murders.

According to detectives who took over the questioning, Gardner quickly admitted a role in the murders--that of a lookout. Phillips, police said, also volunteered to help the detectives solve the murders and then, like Gardner, confessed he was a lookout.

Gardner and Phillips, according to police, implicated the rest of the defendants--Taylor, Mixon, Joseph

Brown, Phillips' brother Paul, Rodney Mathews and Patrick.

A few hours later, just after 2 a.m., four detectives arrived at the youth home where he was staying, and roused a sleeping Taylor. The detectives allowed him to dress, and then took him away for questioning.

Lifetime of trauma

One way or another, Daniel Taylor has been in the custody of the state of Illinois for most of his life.

He became a ward of the Department of Children and Family Services in February 1986, at age 11, though the state first took him away from his mother three years earlier because of her cocaine use.

Taylor was one of four children; he never knew his father. His mother, Debra, now 44 and working as a hospital records analyst, said that Daniel struggled with behavioral problems, particularly a temper.

DCFS has discarded most of Taylor's records, a routine practice when wards "age out" of the system. But what few records remain reveal a youth shunted from one foster home or shelter to another. By his own count, Taylor lived in more than a dozen different homes or facilities growing up.

The remaining records make note of a wide variety of incidents, large and small. One time he threw pepper at a girl. Another time he ran away and stole a car.

Taylor recalls those years as a time when he was increasingly angry and resentful at how his mother's drug use had shattered the family.

"Being in the state, having no family that's your blood, it gets to you sometimes," he said. "It's almost like jail. It's not really home."

He turned to the Vice Lords about three months before he was arrested for the murder. His friends were Vice Lords, he said, so it made sense to him to join them.

They sold drugs, mostly small amounts of cocaine and marijuana, and liked to hang around Clarendon Park, he said.

Before the Lassiter and Haugabook murders, Taylor had been arrested five times, all in the four months before the slayings--three times for mob action and twice for theft, police records show.

Many versions of same story

Three hours after Taylor arrived at the now-closed Area 6 detective headquarters, he gave a 27-page court-reported confession.

Detective Brian Killacky would later testify that Taylor first denied that he knew anything about the murders. Killacky said he then read Taylor his rights and, without any prompting, Taylor "almost immediately" admitted taking part in the murders.

Taylor's account is dramatically different.

Killacky and Detective Anthony Villardita entered the room and, said Taylor, asked what he knew of the murders. Taylor, who was handcuffed to a chair, denied knowing anything, he said. The detectives told him Gardner and Phillips had already implicated him.

When Taylor persisted in his denials, the detectives hit him once in the side with a flashlight, he said, yelled at him and told him they would let him go if he confessed.

Finally, Taylor said, he decided to tell the detectives what they wanted to hear. He said he believed that resisting further was futile, and that the detectives would make good on their promise to release him.

"They said, 'We don't want you. You're not the one. We really want Rodney Mathews and Deon Patrick,' " Taylor said in an interview.

Taylor said his confession was made up of details he picked up from the detectives' questions, from information he had heard on the street and from Akia Phillips' confession, which they gave him to read.

"I just sort of put it all together," Taylor said.

In the confession, Taylor said that he, Mathews, Patrick and Mixon went to Lassiter's apartment to collect a \$200 or \$300 drug debt owed to Mixon. Gardner, brothers Akia and Paul Phillips, and Brown stayed outside as lookouts.

When Lassiter said he did not have the money, according to the confession, Patrick shot him. Patrick then shot Haugabook as Taylor and Mixon held her arms.

On the last page of Taylor's confession, Assistant State's Atty. Joe Magats noted the time: 5:52 a.m.

Taylor was then put in a line-up where Faye McCoy, the woman who lived in the building and saw a group of men leaving after the shooting, was asked if she recognized him.

McCoy said she had seen Taylor in the neighborhood before, but she was certain he was not one of the four men she saw after the murders.

In an interview with the Tribune, McCoy said detectives pressed her to implicate Taylor, sometimes coming to her home in the middle of the night to get her to say she saw Taylor at the building. But she refused.

"They told me, 'They say they did it,' " said McCoy, 51, a neighborhood activist who has served on local school councils. "They kept on bringing me pictures and trying to get me to say it was them."

After the line-up, Taylor was jolted when he was told he was being held on murder charges. He said he searched his mind for where he was Nov. 16.

He remembered a court date, Nov. 19, and worked backward to recall that he had been arrested the night Lassiter and Haugabook were slain and could not have been involved. He then blurted out that he had been in the lockup.

Even after detectives found records that showed Taylor had indeed been arrested and locked up, Taylor still did not go free.

Three months later, detectives arrested Mixon and said that he confessed as well. Mixon told police that when the eight defendants met at Clarendon Park before they went to Lassiter's apartment, Taylor said he had just been released from the police lockup.

Mixon's confession is the only one that was made after police learned of the lockup records that gave Taylor an alibi. It also is the only confession to work Taylor's time in police custody into the narrative of the murders, providing details that would bolster the police account of what happened that night.

Taylor's case goes to trial

By the time Taylor came to trial in late August 1995, three of his co-defendants had been set free. In one case, Judge Thomas Hett ruled that the arrest was illegal--and the confession should be thrown out--because there was insufficient evidence to take him into custody. In another, he ruled that a detective's promise to drop unrelated drug charges was an improper inducement to confess.

In the third, a jury acquitted Rodney Mathews, who said that he confessed only because detectives mistreated him.

"When they chain you up to the wall, that's something," Mathews said in an interview. "No food. Nothing. I pissed myself. Then you get all tired.

"That's how you sign it. Your heart, man, everything is gone. I was just really tired. I was wet. I just couldn't take it no more."

For Taylor's jury, the issue was simple: Was he in the apartment on Agatite Avenue when Lassiter and Haugabook were shot, or was he in custody in the Town Hall District lockup at Addison and Halsted Streets?

The prosecution was led by Thomas Needham, the son of a high-ranking Chicago police officer and later a top aide to Mayor Richard M. Daley. Currently, he works as the chief of staff at the city Police Department and is on the governor's commission studying reform of the death penalty in Illinois.

When Needham and prosecutor Jeanne Bischoff entered Hett's courtroom for Taylor's trial, their best piece of evidence against Taylor was his confession.

Fingerprints found in Lassiter's apartment did not match Taylor or his co-defendants; no DNA was found that linked Taylor or the other defendants to the murders; and police never recovered the murder weapon.

To challenge Taylor's arrest and lockup records, the prosecutors called Adrian Grimes, a convicted drug dealer who testified that he saw Taylor at Clarendon Park at about 7:30 p.m. That put Taylor at the park 45 minutes after his arrest and more than an hour before the 8:43 p.m. murders.

Prosecutors also offered testimony from Officer Sean Glinski, who with Officer Michael Berti filed the Dec. 14 report that they saw Taylor on the street--and not in jail--around 9:30 p.m.

Glinski said he was one of several officers who responded to a radio bulletin of the shooting. When one of the officers tried to question a youth spotted in an alley less than a half-block from the murder scene, the youth fled into a second-floor apartment and Glinski and other officers followed.

The apartment was the home of Akia and Paul Phillips and their mother Andrea. Officers said that they found a small amount of cocaine there and arrested the mother.

Glinski testified that when the officers left the apartment, he encountered Taylor and asked Taylor to help him find one of Phillips' sons. Glinski said that he, Berti and Taylor drove around for 10 or 15 minutes looking for the boy. Police then dropped off Taylor at 10 p.m. at the Columbus-Maryville shelter, on Montrose Avenue.

Taylor's attorney, Nathan Diamond-Falk, forced Glinski to admit that his report was filed almost two weeks after Taylor asserted his alibi and a month after the encounter.

Glinski also acknowledged that the report was not approved by a supervisor, as department rules require, and that the report of the drug arrest never mentioned the encounter with Taylor.

Like the prosecution, the defense relied on the testimony and the records of police officers.

Officer Terrence Duffy testified that he arrested Taylor across the street from Clarendon Park at 6:45 p.m. on the night of the murders. Taylor, he said, had been screaming and jumping around. He was charged with disorderly conduct.

Duffy drove Taylor to the Town Hall District police station, and handcuffed Taylor to a metal ring on the wall. He moved him to the lockup at 7:25 p.m.--about the same time the prosecution put Taylor in the park.

Lockup keeper John Meindl testified that he left for the evening at 9:15 p.m. or 9:30 p.m. and that Taylor was still in the lockup.

Officer James Gillespie testified he started work at the station's front desk at 9:30 p.m. and issued Taylor's bond slip, which said 10 p.m., although he could not recall if he saw Taylor when he was released.

Diamond-Falk also called a handwriting expert, who said that the signature on the bond slip appeared to be Taylor's.

Taylor did not testify.

In closing arguments, Needham and Bischoff sought to discredit the officers who had testified for Taylor, accusing them of covering up sloppy record keeping for fear they would be blamed for letting Taylor leave jail early to commit the murders.

"Paperwork is not foolproof," Bischoff said. "But I'll tell you what is foolproof. And what is foolproof are the defendant's own words."

Diamond-Falk, in his closing, argued that the arrest report and bond slip showed definitively that Taylor was in custody when the murders occurred.

"There isn't one reasonable doubt in this case. The whole case is doubtful," he said. "The whole case is one big doubt despite the statement."

Jurors began deliberating late in the afternoon on September 7. By that evening, they had reached their verdict: guilty.

"A couple people were skeptical for maybe a couple minutes, but once we figured it out, it was pretty easy," one juror, Donald Borta, said in an interview.

Borta said jurors found it easy to believe that the records from the lockup officers were wrong. They could not imagine a false confession.

"The only piece that didn't seem to fit was that stuff that he'd been in jail at the time," said Daniel Cacchione, another former juror. "He could have walked out the back door for all we knew. Who knew if he was really in jail?"

Taylor was sentenced to life in prison.

Mixon, who was tried simultaneously by a separate jury, was convicted as well and also sentenced to life.

In an interview at Stateville Correctional Center, Mixon acknowledged he was in the building courtyard around the time of the murders. But he denied that he was involved. He insisted that Taylor and the six other defendants were wrongly charged.

"The guys they had in this case with me, they never set foot in that apartment," Mixon said. "Daniel Taylor, he wasn't even there."

New documents cast doubts

The testimony at Taylor's trial told only part of the story.

Adrian Grimes, a prosecution witness, told the Tribune that he lied when he testified before a grand jury and at trial that Taylor was at the park a short time before the murders occurred.

He said that while the trial was under way, he was picked up on a felony narcotics charge that had been dismissed for a lack of evidence earlier that year. But prosecutors re-indicted him and an arrest warrant was issued that allowed police to take him into custody.

Grimes said two police officers, whose names he could not recall, threatened to keep him locked up if he did not cooperate in the Taylor case.

"I wasn't even at the park," Grimes said in an interview in Logan Correctional Center in Lincoln, where he is serving time for drug possession. "But [the police] kept saying, 'If you testify this guy right here was at the park, we'll let you go.'"

"They told me, 'Won't nobody care about him. He ain't got no family. It won't be nobody's loss.'"

Two months after he testified at Taylor's trial, Grimes pleaded guilty. Although he faced one to three years in prison, he was given two years conditional discharge and was not even required to report to a probation officer.

"Mr. Grimes was a material witness to a homicide which resulted in a conviction," a prosecutor told the judge. "This was not part of his plea agreement in regards to his testifying but because he did testify and because there was two convictions, that's why we're asking for two years conditional discharge on this matter."

Grimes said he now regrets his part in Taylor's trial.

"My intention wasn't to hurt no one. Only thing they wanted me to do is point him out and say he was at the park," Grimes said. "But they used me to destroy a perfectly good young man's life."

McCoy, another prosecution witness, told the Tribune that before she took the witness stand, prosecutors--like police had done--tried to get her to say more. They hurried her to their offices, she said, and showed her Taylor's confession.

"They were giving me little things they wanted me to say," McCoy said. "And I wouldn't cooperate. I wouldn't lie. They said it's not lying because it's in the confessions. They just wanted the boys. And if those boys had been there, I sure would have said so, no problem."

The Tribune also has obtained documents that cast doubt on the testimony by Glinski and the report that he and his partner, Berti, filed.

Their report said that after they arrested Andrea Phillips on the drug charge, they came outside and saw Taylor on the street, around 9:30 p.m. They said they dropped him off at the Columbus-Maryville shelter around 10 p.m.

Shelter records obtained from DCFS, however, show that Taylor did not arrive at Maryville until 3 a.m. the following morning.

What's more, Phillips said in an interview that she recalled that the officers did not leave her apartment until after 10 p.m. because they stayed to watch a TV news report about police officers with criminal records. A report on that subject was, in fact, the lead story broadcast on WMAQ-Ch. 5 news the night of the murders.

Taylor said that after his release from the lockup, he walked to the Phillips' home and arrived around 10:30 p.m. or 10:45 p.m. He said he never encountered Berti and Glinski that night. He remained at the apartment, he said, until early the next morning.

Phillips, who had been arrested that night, said that while she was still at the Town Hall station, she called the apartment and told Taylor to leave. She said she believed the drugs found in the apartment were Taylor's and that he was responsible for her arrest. Police reports obtained by the Tribune say that she made a call about 1:30 a.m.

Taylor recalled that after Phillips called to order him out, he walked to Maryville.

The Tribune also uncovered the transcript of a court hearing from August 1992, four months before Berti and Glinski filed their key report, that raises questions about Berti's credibility.

During a pretrial hearing in an unrelated murder case, then-Cook County Circuit Judge Earl Strayhorn took the extremely rare action of ordering Berti off the witness stand in midtestimony, declaring, "I don't believe a thing he says. He goes down in my book as a liar."

The Tribune also discovered police reports in the files prosecutors turned over to one of Taylor's co-defendants that Taylor's lawyer said he never received.

One report, dated December 29, reads: "Need to locate James Anderson concerning the Lassiter Homicide. Anderson was locked up in 023 District with [Taylor] . . ." A report two days after that indicates that the police were still looking for Anderson.

At the time, Anderson was a cocaine and marijuana abuser who had a lengthy record of arrests and convictions, mostly for theft. He took many of his meals at a Salvation Army shelter.

In an interview with the Tribune at the Champaign County Jail, where he was being held on a bad-check charge, Anderson said that the police did find him. He recalled that he had been arrested on the day of the murders on a warrant for retail theft.

He could not recall the names of the detectives who interviewed him, but he said that he told them that he remembered being in a cell that evening with a young black man.

"I told them I remembered being in with a kid," Anderson said in the interview. "I said I remembered the kid. But then they sort of lost interest."

Under the law, prosecutors are required to turn over evidence that could be favorable to the defense. Diamond-Falk said he doesn't remember prosecutors giving him those reports and could not find them in his files. Prosecutors Needham and Bischoff declined to comment.

Diamond-Falk said the reports could have been used to find Anderson and bolster Taylor's alibi. "Why didn't I get this? Why?" he asked, looking at the papers. "I should have gotten this."

Diamond-Falk said that he did not hire an investigator to work on the case with him; instead, he tried to do his own pretrial investigation.

His itemized bill to the court, charging \$7,028 to defend Taylor, shows that Diamond-Falk did about 15 hours of case investigation. That included four hours meeting with Taylor at the jail, and two hours timing various drives, such as from the youth home where Taylor had been staying to the Area 6 violent crimes unit office at Belmont and Western Avenues where he was interrogated.

Diamond-Falk conceded that he should have retrieved the Maryville records because they were critical to

bolstering Taylor's alibi. He said he never tried to track down any of the prisoners who might have been in the lockup with Taylor.

"I'm a . . . moron," he said, shaking his head.

Out of touch with the world

Since coming to Stateville prison, Taylor has received his GED, and he works as a teacher's aide, making \$45 a month. He has little contact with the outside world. Most of his friends do not accept his collect calls, the only kind that can be made from prison.

He also has lost touch with his family and has had only sporadic phone contact with his mother. She has never come to see him. Now, he can hardly remember her face.

"All I can remember, really, is that she's dark-skinned like me," he said.

His first appeal was denied in 1998 by a three-judge panel of the Illinois Appellate Court.

Earlier this year, he filed a second appeal on his own, using the prison's law library to research legal issues and consulting other inmates. Judge Bertina Lampkin dismissed that petition.

Taylor said that he was not surprised by Lampkin's ruling but still was disappointed.

"I don't understand how I can be in here," he said. "How many times can somebody say they can prove their innocence like me?"

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New evidence undermines Daniel Taylor's conviction

Early in the morning on Dec. 3, 1992, after Chicago Police detectives roused him from sleep at a youth shelter, 17-year-old Daniel Taylor confessed to the murder of two people in an Uptown apartment. But records showed that Taylor was being held at a police station on an unrelated charge the night of the killings. A jury convicted Taylor despite his alibi, and he was sentenced to life in prison. A Tribune investigation found evidence bolstering Taylor's claim of innocence.

The night of the crime: Conflicting accounts of Nov. 16, 1992

8:43 p.m. Time of murders

Site of murders: 910 W. Agatite Ave.

1. Town Hall District police station
2. Phillips' apartment
3. Youth shelter

PROSECUTION'S EVIDENCE

7 p.m. In his confession, Taylor said he was meeting with fellow gang members in Clarendon Park.

7:30 p.m. Convicted drug dealer Adrian Grimes testifies that he saw Taylor at Clarendon Park. Grimes later told the Tribune he wasn't even at the park.

9:30 p.m. Officer Sean Glinski testifies he and Officer Michael Berti saw Taylor on the street after arresting Andrea Phillips in her apartment (2 on map). He said Taylor rode in a police car with him for 10 or 15 minutes helping him look for Phillips' son.

10 p.m. Glinski testifies he and Berti dropped off Taylor at the Columbus-Maryville youth shelter (3 on map) on Montrose Avenue.

Nearly a month after the murders--after police learned Taylor had an alibi--Berti and Glinski filed a report (above) saying they had seen Taylor on Nov. 16. It was not signed by a supervisor.

TAYLOR'S CO-DEFENDANTS

Seven other people confessed to taking part in the crime.

- Four defendants also were convicted, with sentences ranging from 30 years in prison to a life sentence.
- Three defendants were freed. A judge ruled that police had illegally arrested one and improperly promised to drop unrelated charges against another. A jury acquitted the third.

EVIDENCE USED IN TAYLOR'S DEFENSE

6:45 p.m. Taylor was arrested near Clarendon Park for disorderly conduct, a police report shows. He was taken to Town Hall District station (1 on map) at Addison and Halsted Streets.

7:25 p.m. Records show Taylor was moved into the lockup at the station.

Between 9:15-9:30 p.m. Taylor still was in the lockup, an officer who left the station at that time testified.

10 p.m. Taylor was released from the lockup, a bond slip (right) shows.

DISCOVERED DURING TRIBUNE INVESTIGATION

Shortly after 10 p.m. Andrea Phillips said Berti and Glinski did not leave her apartment until after they had watched the first part of a 10 p.m. newscast about police misconduct.

Between 10:30 and 10:45 p.m. Taylor, a friend of Phillips' son, says he walked to the apartment after he was released from the lockup.

1:30 a.m. Police reports show Phillips placed a phone call from the station. She says she called home and told Taylor to leave when she found out he was there.

3 a.m. Computer records show Taylor arrived at the Columbus-Maryville youth shelter on Montrose.

Sources: Court and Chicago Police Department records, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Tribune interviews

Chicago Tribune

THE SERIES

SUNDAY

Tainted confessions

Since 1991, at least 247 murder confessions have failed to hold up.

MONDAY

Police tactics

One cop's history of dubious confessions.

TUESDAY

Juvenile arrests

Police often violate laws designed to protect youths.

WEDNESDAY

A case study

When being in jail is no alibi.

- Read all of "Cops and confessions" online at chicagotribune.com

Caption:

PHOTOS 6 GRAPHIC MAP

Caption:

PHOTO (color): Cops and confessions.

PHOTO: Faye McCoy, who lived in the Uptown apartment building where the

murders occurred, said she saw four men leave after the killings and Daniel Taylor was not one of them. Tribune photo by Ovie Carter.

PHOTO (color): A jury convicted Daniel Taylor in two murders and gave him a

life sentence in spite of police reports that showed he was in jail at the time. Taylor had confessed to the killings. Tribune photo by Ovie Carter.

PHOTO: Dennis Mixon was also convicted in the 1992 Uptown murders and

sentenced to life in prison. Mixon insisted that Daniel Taylor was wrongly charged. " He wasn't even there," Mixon said.

PHOTO: Daniel Taylor told police that he and seven other gang members met at

Clarendon Park to plot the Uptown murders. Taylor later told police his confession was false. Tribune photos by Ovie Carter.

PHOTO: Police said Lewis Gardner confessed that he was a lookout the night of

the murder and said Daniel Taylor was also involved.

MAP: Site of murders: 910 W. Agatite Ave.

1. Town Hall District police station
2. Phillips' apartment
3. Youth shelter

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Section: News

Page: 1

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