

With murder conviction overturned, Bruce Lisker is slated for release

By MATT LAIT

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A federal judge who last week overturned the murder conviction of Bruce Lisker said Monday that she intends to release him on bail while government lawyers decide what they will do with the case.

U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillips in Riverside said she would grant bail after court staff had interviewed Lisker's friends and supporters to determine the proper bail amount and other conditions of his release.

That means Lisker, 44, could walk out of prison as soon as this week after more than 26 years behind bars.

Ultimately, Lisker's freedom will be influenced by what government attorneys do next. They could appeal Phillips' ruling overturning Lisker's conviction, retry him for the March 10, 1983, killing of his mother, or drop the case altogether.

A lawyer for the state Attorney General's office said no decision has been made about an appeal. But he said the L.A. County District Attorney's office is prepared to retry Lisker on a murder charge.

Lisker's conviction was overturned last week when Phillips concluded that the San Fernando Valley man was prosecuted with "false evidence" and did not receive adequate representation from his defense attorney.

The judge's finding mirrored those of a seven-month Times investigation published in 2005 that raised questions about the prosecution's case against Lisker and exposed the Los Angeles Police Department's investigation into the slaying of his 66-year-old mother, Dorka, as sloppy and incomplete.

Phillips dismissed arguments from a deputy attorney general who said Lisker is a danger to the community and poses a flight risk.

More than a dozen of Lisker's friends and supporters appeared at the hearing, including Kathie Klass, Lisker's cousin and only living relative.

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