

After 26 years, bail for Lisker

By MATT LAIT

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A federal judge who last week overturned the murder conviction of Bruce Lisker granted him bail Tuesday, meaning the San Fernando Valley man could be released from prison within days.

U.S. District Judge Virginia A. Phillips said Lisker, 44, should be released “forthwith,” and ordered him to appear in her Riverside courtroom Monday to review the conditions of his release. Prison officials said they have up to five business days in which to release Lisker, who has spent 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 Monday that no decision had 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 he was prosecuted with “false evidence” and did not receive adequate representation from his defense attorney.

The judge’s findings 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.

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