

Timeline

Lisa Khoo and Owen Wood, CBC News Online | July 21, 2003

Aug. 9, 1967

Ottawa firefighter Leopold Roy is stabbed to death.

1972

Romeo Phillion is convicted of the murder of Roy. Though he confessed to the murder while in custody on a robbery charge, Phillion immediately recanted and has maintained his innocence ever since.

Phillion appealed the conviction but to no avail. He has refused to apply for parole, saying it would be an admission of guilt.

When he was later asked why he confessed, Phillion would only say it was all a bad joke that cost him his life.

May 15, 2003

Phillion files an application asking Ottawa to set aside his conviction and order a new trial.

A police report not shown to the defence at the original trial confirms Phillion was stuck at a service station in Trenton, Ont. (200 kilometres from Ottawa) when the crime took place, according to Phillion's lawyer and a group of law students from York University's Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto. The group, called "The Innocence Project," also says there's evidence that four Crown witnesses all changed their testimony about when they saw Phillion in Ottawa.

June 2003

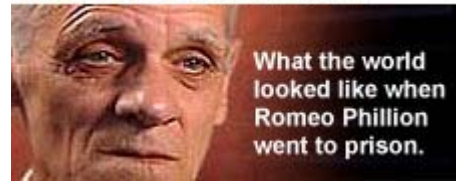
Ontario Superior Court Justice David Watt says he is satisfied that he has jurisdiction to rule on Phillion's bail application. However, he says he does not have the power to determine whether the 1972 conviction was justified.

July 21, 2003

The Ontario Superior Court releases 64-year-old Romeo Phillion on \$50,000 bail while the federal justice minister investigates whether he was wrongfully convicted. Phillion had been in jail for 31 years. He will live at his sister's home in Mississauga, Ont., while his case is being reviewed.

As a condition of his bail, Justice Watt said Phillion should receive support from the John Howard Society, a prisoners' rights group, and St. Leonard's House, which provides assistance for the reintegration of prisoners into society. "It would be unfair in my mind, unthinkable, to turn loose a person who has been in prison for three decades" without some sort of support, he said.

The review of the case could take as long as a year, according to Phillion's lawyer, James Lockyer. If Phillion's innocence is proven in court, his jail time would make him the longest-serving wrongfully convicted prisoner in Canadian history, says Lockyer.



LEADERS

- **Canada**
Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau
- **U.S.**
President Richard Nixon
- **U.S.S.R.**
President Leonid Brezhnev
- **China**
Chairman Mao Tse-tung

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- 11 Israeli athletes killed during terrorist attack at Munich Olympic Games
- U.S. steps up bombing campaign in Vietnam War
- Ugandan president Idi Amin announces expulsion of 50,000 Asians
- Britain imposes direct rule on Northern Ireland; 13 Irish marchers killed by British troops on Bloody Sunday
- Nicaraguan earthquake kills 10,000
- Ceylon becomes Republic of Sri Lanka
- Apollo 16 lands on the moon
- Canada/Soviet Union summit hockey series
- Trudeau's Liberals win a minority government by only two seats. Conservatives are led by Robert Stanfield
- Telesat launched its Anik A1 satellite
- U.S. and U.S.S.R. sign SALT 1 nuclear arms and ABM deals
- Watergate charges brought against Nixon aides
- Video game Pong introduced (arcade version)
- Academy Award for Best Picture: *The Godfather*
- Record of the year: *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*
Roberta Flack
- Television series M*A*S*H premieres