

Man Acquitted of Killing Wife After Fourth Trial

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May 25, 2016



After a fourth trial, Calvin Harris, left, has been acquitted of the murder of his estranged wife Michele, right. A state judge acquitted an upstate businessman Tuesday of murdering his estranged wife on Sept. 11, 2001, in the fourth time the defendant stood trial for the crime.

Supreme Court [Justice Richard Mott](#) announced his verdict in Schoharie County Court after spending what he said were about 12 1/2 hours deliberating in the second-degree murder trial of Calvin Harris since closing arguments last Wednesday.

Harris, 54, opted for a bench trial after having juries decide his fate in three previous trials. His previous convictions in Tioga County in 2007 and 2009 were overturned on appeal. After an Appellate Division, Third Department, panel ordered a venue change to Schoharie County ([NYLJ, Jan. 22, 2014](#)), a jury there could not reach a verdict in in 2015.

"There are no winners in this case," Harris told reporters outside court after the verdict was announced. "They robbed me of my life as a father to raise my kids."

Harris, 54, was represented by Bruce Barket, partner at Barket Marion Epstein & Kearon of Garden City, along with firm partner Donna Aldea and associate Aida Leisenring.

Tioga County District Attorney Kirk Martin prosecuted, aided by Albany lawyer Paul Clyne, former Albany County district attorney.

Harris maintained that other men were responsible for his estranged wife Michele's death and that the droplets of her blood that police found in the Harris home were not enough to prove that she had been killed there violently.

Her body has never been found.

Authorities claimed that Harris used the upheaval surrounding 9/11 to help him conceal the slaying and disappearance of his wife.