

Trial ordered for man accused in 1970 Wis. murder

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MILWAUKEE -- A 73-year-old suspected of a 1970 Milwaukee murder has been ordered to stand trial to determine whether he's sexually violent.

Robert Hill recently finished serving a 10-year sentence for allegedly sexually assaulting four children under the age of 10 between 1995 and 2002.

But police say Hill confessed to the murder of nine-year-old Donna Willing in February 1970 but later recanted. They say he knew details that hadn't been released.

"Mr. Hill indicated he knew Donna. He knew her very well. He talked about the relationship he had with her, that they were close, very close, that he would babysit for her," Milwaukee Police Detective Kathleen Spano said.

Willing was raped and strangled just blocks from her west side home in 1970. Milwaukee police cold case detectives reopened the investigation about five years ago, and Hill admitted to the gruesome crime.

However, Hill later recanted.

Biological evidence was destroyed or lost in the 1990s that could help convict Hill, so prosecutors are trying to use the state's sex offender law to keep him in custody. A judge determined Monday there's enough evidence to move to trial. Prosecutors will have to prove he's a sexually violent person.

Police and relatives are relying on Chapter 980 -- a statute which allows the state to keep someone in custody if they're deemed to have a disorder that makes them likely to reoffend.

"The diagnosis of pedophilia and personality disorder make it more likely than not the respondent will commit acts of sexual violence in the future," psychologist Cynthia Marsh said.

Hill is expected back in court on February 11th.