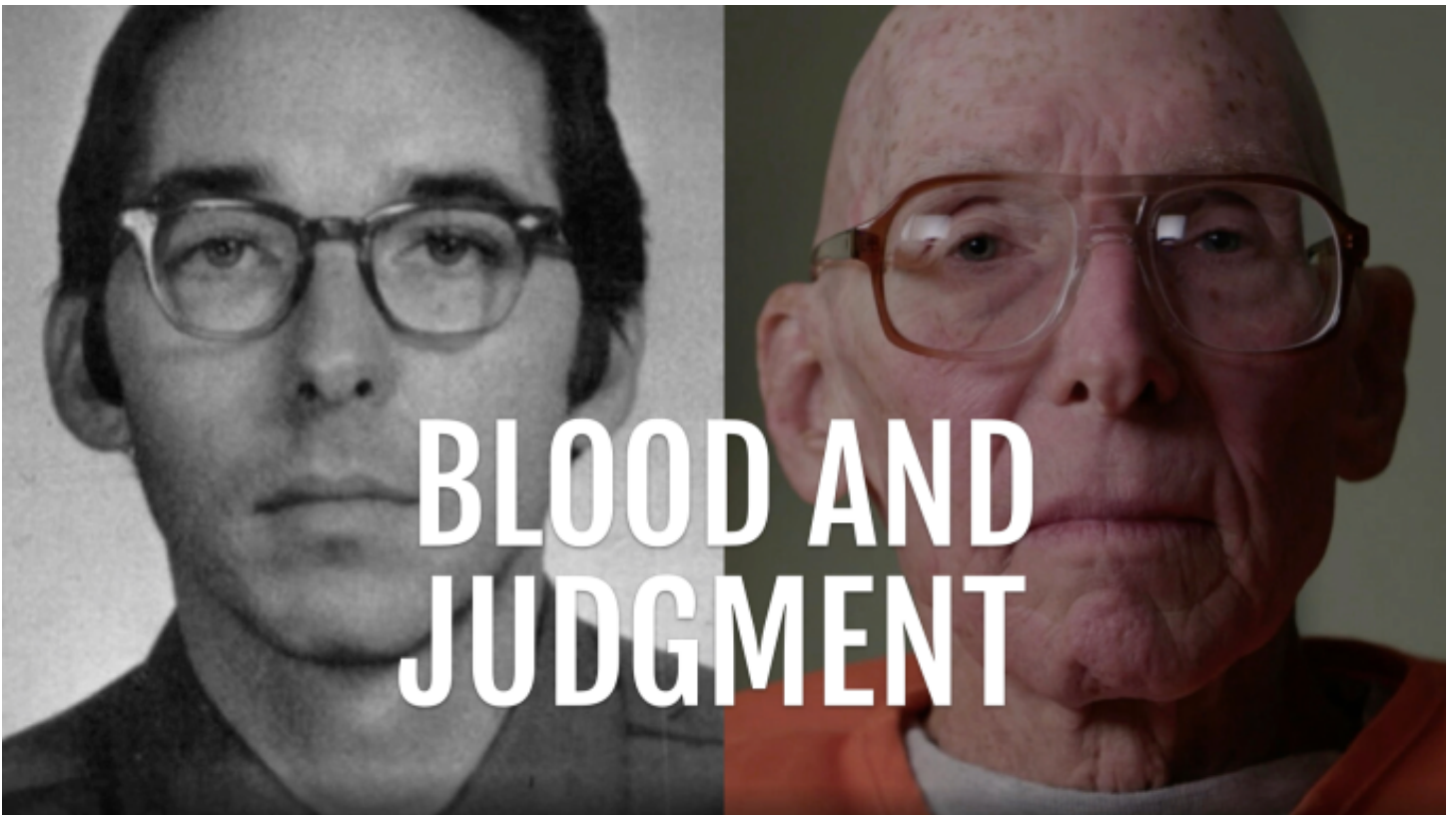


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'Blood And Judgment' Doc On America's Longest-Serving Death Row Inmate Tommy Zeigler In Works From Left/Right, 'Monk's Andy Breckman

By [Matt Grobar](#)

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Left/Right

EXCLUSIVE: America's longest-serving death row inmate, [Tommy Zeigler](#), and his fight for exoneration after nearly 50 years behind bars on a murder conviction, are getting the documentary treatment courtesy of award-winning

Producers on the film, *Blood and Judgment* (w/t), include [Andy Breckman](#) — the four-time Emmy nominee known for creating the hit USA Network comedy series, *Monk* — and Ken Druckerman and Banks Tarver from [Left/Right](#), a North Road company (*The New York Times Presents: Framing Britney Spears*).

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Blood and Judgment asks whether Zeigler is a criminal mastermind, or the victim of an ingenious frame-up. Its story is thrust into motion on Christmas Eve 1975, as a multiple homicide unfolds in a locked furniture store outside of Orlando, Florida. Amid the chaotic, bloody crime scene — four bodies, eight guns, 28 bullets — a young detective soon settles on a surprising suspect. Police arrest store owner Tommy Zeigler, hospitalized with a .38 wound through his gut.

Convicted and sentenced to death months later, Zeigler has twice come within hours of the electric chair, though throughout the decades, he's consistently maintained his innocence. Over the decades a pro bono team of lawyers, a private investigator, a true-crime author and others have uncovered major issues with the case — including a disappearing witness, a missing will, a sedated juror and a homophobic whisper campaign — that may add up to an elaborate frame-up by the real perpetrators. And still, state authorities have steadfastly opposed the DNA testing Zeigler insists will exonerate him. Until now.

including blood spatter, fingernail scrapings, vomit and more. Results are expected by the summer.

The turning point in Zeigler's fight for testing came in 2021, when progressive prosecutor Monique Worrell rode a Black Lives Matter wave to become Orange County's elected chief prosecutor. Worrell, who is Black, had previously investigated the case of Zeigler, who is white, and told the filmmakers that it shows "the criminal legal system is a machine, and anyone can get caught in that machine." Worrell's office worked with Zeigler's lawyers to release the evidence for testing, overcoming intense pushback from Gov. Ron DeSantis' attorney general.

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It was Breckman who first brought Ziegler's story to Van Taylor, with the latter then pitching the team at Left/Right. Johnson, a Florida-based filmmaker, joined the team soon after production began. The team has independently financed the project and followed the unfolding story over the course of the last five years, with exclusive behind-the-scenes access to key players.

Van Taylor told Deadline that "this project was compelling from the get-go, but our bet was that one day the courts would agree to testing. That day has finally come."

Breckman added that "with its *Sherlock*-style 'locked room' mystery, this story has blown my mind for decades. It's like a real-life *Knives Out*. I can hardly wait for state-of-the-art DNA testing to reveal what really happened."

"This is a five-decade-long true crime story, a forensic mystery, and a modern-day social-justice thriller, all rolled into one," said Druckerman in closing. "And we're

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Van Taylor is an IDA Award winner and News & Documentary Emmy nominee whose feature credits include *To Tell the Truth*, *Advise & Dissent*, *A Perfect Candidate* and *Dream Deceivers: The Story Behind James Vance vs. Judas Priest*. He's also directed and produced on such series as *Death Row Stories*, *True Crime with Aphrodite Jones* and *Intervention*, among others.

Johnson is a SXSW Audience Award nominee who has directed and produced documentaries including *River City Drumbeat*, *Symphony in D* and *Deep City*.

Breckman's series *Monk*, starring Tony Shalhoub, aired for eight seasons on USA Network from 2002-2009. He more recently created the comedy *The Good Cop*, starring Tony Danza and Josh Groban, for Netflix. Additional writing credits include the 2001 Jerry Zucker comedy *Rat Race* and *Saturday Night Live*.

IDA, News & Documentary Emmy and Peabody Award winners Druckerman and Tarver founded Left/Right in 2005. Other notable recent titles exec produced by the duo include *Turn Every Page – The Adventures of Robert Caro and Robert Gottlieb*, *The New York Times Presents* and *The Circus: Inside the Greatest Political Show on Earth*.

Left/Right is represented by WME; Breckman by CAA and 3 Arts Entertainment.

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