

Witness in '76 murder testifies of coercion by cops

By Jeff Coen
Tribune staff reporter

The only witness to link Michael Evans to the kidnapping of 9-year-old murder victim Lisa Cabassa in 1976 testified Thursday that police officers held her against her will before she named Evans and then forced her to testify against him.

"I asked many times to be able to call my husband or to go home and they did not allow me to do that," said Judith Janus-

zewski, who lived several houses down from Evans at the time the 9-year-old girl was raped and killed. Januszewski was held by police for hours with no family contact, almost no food and no opportunity to go to the bathroom, she said.

Evans, who is now 47, spent 27 years in prison before DNA evidence exonerated him in 2003. He is suing the city and 12 police officers in federal court, alleging he was framed by detectives who manipulated evidence and coerced Januszewski into say-

ing she saw him with the girl.

Januszewski said police threatened her. She agreed with Evans' attorney, Jonathan Loevy, that the message to her was that she could not leave until she gave officers a name of a suspect.

"I was told that they have ways of making people talk," Januszewski said.

Attorneys representing the officers have argued police acted appropriately against Evans after Januszewski named him and that she remains a solid witness against him.

Januszewski said she has been treated for depression since Evans was incarcerated. She stood by her story that she saw Evans and his one-time co-defendant Paul Terry standing with Cabassa on the night she

disappeared. Terry was also exonerated.

Loevy confronted Januszewski with inconsistencies in her account, including the number of people she said she saw and what their race was.

Januszewski acknowledged she was without her glasses in the dark on the night in question and that she does not know how far she was from the men.

Januszewski said she would never testify against Evans again.

"The fact that that person there spent all those years based on what I saw on that corner and nothing more is a very hard situation for me to deal with," she said. "My life is devastated also."

Januszewski is expected to be cross-examined Monday.