

Convicted murderer who helped search for Dugard back behind bars

By Kirk Mitchell, Denver Post

STERLING, Colo. – For 32 years, Colorado officials took few steps to capture convicted killer Robert Charles Johnson, who escaped the Cañon City prison in 1975.

They filed, but didn't pursue, an escape charge against him. He traveled across the country and spent decades working as a river-rafting guide. Even a 1990 California arrest wasn't enough to get Colorado prison officials or prosecutors interested in chasing him down.

That changed in 2005 after the Department of Corrections created a cold-case fugitive unit. Within two years, Johnson was back behind bars.

Now Johnson, 60, faces more time in prison for his escape than he ever would have served for the original murder charge – and he still has as many as 10 years or so left to serve for that.

In an interview from Sterling Correctional Facility, he said he fears his golden years will be consumed behind bars even though he says he has lived a model life for decades.

Fremont County District Attorney Thom LeDoux said there has to be a penalty for escape regardless of how well someone behaves after fleeing – or there would be no deterrent.

Read the whole story