

**DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving**

“Richmond; State DNA lab marks 1,000th 'cold hit.’” The San Francisco Chronicle, October 28, 2004.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer announced that through the State Department of Justice’s DNA Databank, over 1, 028 old criminal cases have now been linked to convicted felons.

“Manhattan 'John Does'; DNA Leads to Arrests in Rapes; One Charged in the 1996 Subway Attack of an Exchange Student, the Other in a 1994 Harlem Park Attack.” Newsday (New York), October 28, 2004.

Two men have been arrested in separate “John Doe” rape cases. David Martinez, 47, is charged with the attempted rape of a German exchange student in a subway station in 1996. Johnny Boone, 50, was charged with the 1994 attack of a woman in Harlem. Both men are being charged based on “John Doe” indictments, with which prosecutors seek to avoid the statute of limitations.

“DNA Links Prisoner to Slayings in Los Angeles,” Orlando Sentinel (Florida) October 24, 2004.

Los Angeles—linked by DNA evidence, a prison inmate is being charged with the killings of a dozen women in L.A., including 3 slayings for which another man was wrongly convicted.

**Controversies Concerning DNA Databanks and Laboratories**

“Contested Cases, Houston Crime Lab Problems,” The Dallas Morning News, October 22, 2004.

“Houston Crime Lab Problems as of Oct. 15, 2004:

1,342 Police cases reviewed for DNA problems

395 Cases selected for DNA retesting

324 Retests, reviews finished

292 Affirmed by retesting

26 Inadequate DNA to test, other problems

2 Convictions overturned since controversy began\*

ON DEATH ROW

17 Death row cases retested\*\*

10 Death row cases affirmed

4 Death row cases results not back

3 Death row cases that may be unconfirmable

RETESTING

Retest labs: Identigene of Houston, Orchid Celmark of Dallas, Reliagene of New Orleans

Cost: \$2 million

\* One reversal because of blood test error, not DNA

\*\* Among the 395 cases selected for DNA retesting”

**DNA Database Funding and Backlog**

“DNA Testing Act Finally Passes.” Hartford Courant (Connecticut), October 28, 2004.

Both chambers of the Senate Judiciary Committee have finally passed the Advancing Justice Through DNA Technology Act to clear up national backlog of DNA evidence. The act is now being sent to President Bush, who is expected to sign it.

“DNA Yields Leads in Old Crimes; Samples from felons finally being tested.” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), October 27, 2004.

After processing more than 19,000 current or former inmates’s DNA that sat in the states backlog of DNA samples for more than two years, Ohio law enforcement officials have announced potential suspects in 202 previously unsolved cases.

“U.S. Digest,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri), November 2, 2004.

President Bush has signed into law a \$1 billion program for the greater accessibility of DNA testing for felons and rape victims. The law ensures access to post conviction DNA testing for those serving prison sentences. The law also provides \$755 million to clear up the DNA backlog over the next 5 years.

“DNA Project Gets \$1.3M,” The Toronto Sun, November 2, 2004.

The Ontario government is investing \$1.3 million in a DNA research project. The funds will be spent on a DNA education and research network called Pathfinder.

“Coroner makes push for DNA lab; Voters decide on tax to pay for it,” Times-Picayune (New Orleans), October 28, 2004.

Peter Galvan, St. Tammany Parish Coroner, is seeking voter approval of 4 mill from property tax on Tuesday’s ballot, to generate \$ 2.8 million annually for the coroner’s office for the creation of a DNA testing lab.

“Coroner says ads sold voters on tax plan; Plan to fund DNA testing lab would’ve failed without it, he says,” Times-Picayune (New Orleans), November 4, 2004.

On November 2, voters approved a tax to fund a DNA testing lab in St. Tammany Parish. The millage will increase the annual budget of the coroner’s office to \$3.45 million, an increase of over 400 percent.

**Expanding the DNA Databank**

“Police Try Extending Use of DNA Tests to More Crimes.” The New York Times, October 26, 2004.

After a burglary in Queens, police used DNA evidence from the crime scene to compare with DNA samples from the DNA databank. Police found that not only did the DNA match samples from four other burglaries, but that the DNA also belonged to a man named Robert Medina, a 24-year-old with prior felony convictions.

This finding was made possible by an experimental expansion of DNA testing at crime scenes under a program called Biotracks. Biotracks has identified 23 suspects tied to 34 unsolved cases. The national institute of Justice has made grants for DNA testing in property cases to Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties, and New York. The grants are part of President Bush’s \$5 Billion initiative that hopes to make DNA a routine law-enforcement tool.

**DNA Science and Technology**

“News roundup: Technology: DNA test may name names,” The Guardian (London), November 4, 2004.

New genetic tests are being developed by scientists that could allow police to identify families to which a criminal may belong. The tests will link DNA to familial surnames providing police with possible names to follow up with in criminal cases. DNA forensic testing has been increased due to the changed law which includes DNA testing of all arrestees not just convicted criminals.