

Week of October 29-November 4, 2004

Prepared by Rebecca Mitcheson

DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“DNA Helps Police Make Arrest in 1987 Killing; Case involved death of 23-year-old found in University District,” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), October 29, 2004.

DNA has solved a 1987 slaying that was from among the state’s cold case files.

“Painesville Man Won’t Get DNA Test; Sake serving life term in 1989 Eastlake slaying.” Plain Dealer (Cleveland), October 29, 2004.

Under an Ohio Law enacted last year, inmates may seek DNA testing in their cases under certain conditions, in order to overturn their convictions. A Painesville man, who is convicted of murder, has had his request denied based on sample contamination.

“Los Angeles; Suspect Plans to Fight Charges in 10 Slayings, Lawyer Says.” Los Angeles Times, October 29, 2004.

In the serial murder case brought against Chester Dewayne Turner, the defendant plans to plead not guilty. The defendant’s lawyer plans to aggressively review the DNA evidence that was used to link Turner to the crimes, including how the databank works, how the DNA was acquired and how testing was conducted.

Controversies Concerning DNA Databanks and Laboratories

“Time Runs out on Rape Charges; 43 of 135 counts against Linden-area assault suspect dropped,” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), October 30, 2004.

Although Robert N. Patton Jr. showed police where he had raped his victims and confessed to being the Linden-area rapist, he will not have to face almost one third of the charges filed against him. The charges were dropped because they had expired under the statute of limitations. The state’s backlog was even cleared in efforts to locate the rapist. Patton’s DNA sat for two years unprocessed in the state’s backlog before it was matched any of the attacks.

Expansion of DNA Databanks

“Election 2004 / Voter Guide; Proposition 69; Creating a DNA Database of Suspected Felons.” Los Angeles Times, October 31, 2004.

Proposition 69 is a measure that will require the state to collect DNA samples from anyone arrested in felony cases, and will also expand the State’s DNA database.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“Stockton; DNA Frees Man Held 10 Years in Sex Case,” The San Francisco Chronicle, October 30, 2004.

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After serving 10 years of a 27 year sentence for sexual assault, a Lodi man has been released after the DNA evidence that was used to convict him was deemed invalid. The DNA was recently retested with a more sophisticated test that proved that the DNA did not belong to the convicted man.

DNA Science and Technology

“The Claim: Identical twins have identical fingerprints.” The New York Times, November 2, 2004.

Although identical twins share many things such as personality traits, interests, habits, and have the same genetic blueprint, they do not share matching fingerprints.