

Week of December 24-December 30, 2004

Prepared by Rebecca Mitcheson

**DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving**

“Man indicted in 1994 slaying; Cold-case squad tied suspect to crime by DNA, they say,”  
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution December 30, 2004.

A 39-year-old Atlanta man was indicted Tuesday in the 1994 murder of a prostitute. Sherman Ridley was arrested when DNA evidence from the crime scene was matched through CODIS, the FBI DNA database.

“Predator At Large; 10 Years Since The Bike-Path Rapist Last Struck, Attacking Nine Women, Two Fatally, The Hunt Goes On,” Buffalo News (New York) December 29, 2004.

Riverside police believed that they had a prime suspect in the sexual attacks of at least 9 women and the murder of two of them. Police tested the suspect’s DNA only to find that it did not match any of the evidence from the crime scenes. This comes one year after they felt that they had their suspect when they tested a North Carolina man. However, after that suspect had his DNA tested he was found to have no links to the crimes, but was linked to a separate rape. Police are stumped by the rapist’s activity, and are unable to identify him through DNA evidence in the databanks, and believe that he will attack again.

“Man Indicted in Girl’s Rape; Kidnapping charge filed in case involving missing 5-year-old,” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio) December 28, 2004.

A 23-year-old man has been charged with raping and kidnapping a 5-year-old girl. Lindey Bruce is at the center of the investigation into the little girl’s disappearance after the child’s DNA was found on Bruce’s genitals.

“Convicted Rapist Gets Life in Prison; Defendant had Been Released from Jail a Month before Attack,” Orlando Sentinel (Florida) December 28, 2004.

Larry James Caldwell was sentenced to life in prison for the rape of a Leesburg woman. Caldwell was found guilty after DNA evidence from the rape was matched through the statewide DNA databank.

“Man pleads not guilty in fatal 1991 stabbing,” The San Diego Union-Tribune December 28, 2004.

The San Diego “Cold Case” homicide detectives have made an arrest in the 1991 robbery and slaying of a 20-year-old Antonio Ayala. The detectives linked the DNA on the inside of a ski mask that was used in the crime to a 35-year-old man Ody Albarran. New DNA

technology allowed the detectives along with the San Diego Police Department Crime Lab to make the match.

“Nicarico case has suspect, DNA link, but no charges; Slow progress in 1983 slaying confounds some,” Chicago Tribune December 26, 2004.

Two years after DuPage County State’s Attorney Joe Birkett said that modern DNA tests proved that convicted murderer Brian Dugan was connected in the 1983 slaying of Jeanine Nicarico, charges against Dugan have yet to be filed. Rolando Cruz was convicted of the murder but recently exonerated through DNA evidence. Dugan is already serving 2 life sentences plus 215 years for murder.

“Would-be rapist runs off at scream Police say a teen's cry saved her from becoming the serial attacker's fifth victim,” Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska) December 26, 2004.

A 15-year-old girl was saved by her mother after the girl screamed while being attacked by a man police now believe to be a serial rapist. The description of the attacker matches that of the serial rapist whose attacks prompted police to request DNA from Omaha Public Power District workers this past summer.

#### **Controversies Concerning DNA Databanks and Laboratories**

“Inquiry into crime lab produces no charges; Special prosecutor says report on county facility nearly finished; work backlog remains a problem,” The Indianapolis Star December 27, 2004.

After a year long investigation into the mismanagement and abuses at Marion County’s crime lab, no criminal charges will be filed. The crime lab was under investigation for tampering with equipment for DNA testing and not following proper procedures.

#### **Expanding the DNA Databank**

“Region In Brief; Mitt to push new bill for death penalty,” The Boston Herald December 29, 2004.

Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney is filing a death penalty bill early next year that he says will guarantee that only the guilty are executed. The bill would use DNA testing to protect the innocent, and limit capital punishment to the “worst of the worst” crimes.

#### **DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges**

“Death Row inmate wins resentencing; Judge questions bite-mark evidence he applied in 1994,” Chicago Tribune December 24, 2004.

A Juma County Judge ruled that new DNA testing and other evidence were not sufficient to exonerate Bobby Lee Tankersly for the rape and murder of a 65-year-old woman in 1994. However, because the original conviction was based strongly on bite mark

Week of December 24-December 30, 2004

Prepared by Rebecca Mitcheson

forensics, that have since been discredited, the Judge has ordered a re-sentencing hearing. The new DNA tests were ordered after another highly publicized bite mark murder case was overturned as a result of DNA testing.