

DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“Sentence Lengthened -- At Rapist's Request; Attacker gets 68 years after judge hears victims of Linden-area assaults,” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio) January 13, 2005.

42 year-old Robert N. Patten, who was found guilty of attacking 37 women over a 17 year period, asked a judge yesterday to put him in jail for the rest of his life. The judge agreed and sentenced Patten to 42 years in prison. Patten was arrested after his DNA was matched to some of the 37 women he had raped.

“Murder trial witness recalls finding her sister's body in 1983; DNA testing tied sex offender to the crime two decades later.” San Antonio Express-News (Texas) January 13, 2005.

Nearly 22 years after the murder and rape of Rachael Kosub, DNA evidence led investigators to Mike Dosset, a registered sex offender. The rape kit containing the forensic evidence from the victim turned up in 2003 after having been missing for 18 years.

“\$50GS Spurs Flood of Calls; Cops Get Tips on Sexual Predator,” The Toronto Sun January 13, 2005.

Police have offered a \$50,000 reward in the search for a suspect who has attacked 3 different victims over the past 14 years. Investigators have the suspect’s DNA from all three attacks.

“Linden-Area Serial Rapist; 'These Women Deserve JUSTICE'; Man pleads guilty to 37 attacks, some past statute of limitations,” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio) January 12, 2005.

Robert N. Patton, known as the Linden-area rapist, said that he wanted to plead guilty to his original indictment, even though 43 counts had been removed through statute of limitations. Patton’s arrest came after his DNA was linked through the DNA database.

“Detectives fear Sally 's killer was serial sex attacker; DNA shows that soldier strangled student,” The Herald (Glasgow) January 12, 2005.

David Atkinson, a Scottish soldier, not only murdered Sally Geeson, but may also have been a serial sex attacker, according to authorities. Atkinson committed suicide after being wanted by police after his DNA was matched through the DNA Database.

Week of January 7-13, 2004
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“DNA frees man, leads to another in sex assault; 5-year-old first suspected grandfather, but mom's boyfriend is now under arrest,” Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin) January 12, 2005.

A 5-year-old girl was sexually assaulted by a man she believed to be her grandfather, which led to the grandfather being charged with the crime. Now DNA evidence has cleared the grandfather of all wrongdoing and indicated instead the mother's boyfriend.

“Hot tip cracks a cold case; State stepped up DNA tests of felons,” Plain Dealer (Cleveland) January 12, 2005.

10 Years after the rape of a 35-year-old woman, the assailant has been identified through the DNA profiles of prisoners in the DNA Database.

“One-Time Serial Suspect Pleads Guilty To Lone Rape,” Daily News (New York) January 11, 2005.

The man believed to be the East Side rapist was cleared in those rapes, but admitted that he raped another woman in an unrelated rape, a rape that had remained unsolved for 7 years. The man was connected to the rape through DNA testing which at the same time cleared him of the serial rapes.

“Scratched man and girl who was never seen again,” The Times (London) January 11, 2005.

The body of Charlotte Pinkney has never been found but DNA evidence in the car of Nicholas Rose, the man who gave her a ride, has led to his being charged with the murder.

“DNA points to new suspect in unresolved 1990 murder,” The Seattle Times January 9, 2005.

Investigators used DNA evidence to clear the name of the man who stood accused of murdering Betty Minnis in 1990 and link the crime to Trenino Rollins, 43, who is currently serving a sentence for a 1991 murder and mutilation of a 19 year old man.

“Crime and Justice,” The Washington Post January 8, 2005.

A Manassas man was charged in a 1983 rape after his DNA matched evidence from the rape.

“DNA identifies suspects in two 1998 rape cases; National database gives Baltimore County police leads in unsolved cases,” The Baltimore Sun January 7, 2005.

The efforts of the Baltimore County Police Department to solve old crimes with new DNA testing, has led to the solving of two separate rapes from 1998.

“Such Evil Defies Any Explanation; Michele Mandel Goes To Court To Hear A 'Sicko' Plead Guilty To Raping And Robbing A 78-Year-Old Widow,” The Toronto Sun January 7, 2005.

27-year-old Curtis Robinson has been charged with the brutal rape and robbery of a 78-year-old widow with Parkinson’s disease on her scooter. DNA testing confirmed that Robinson was the attacker.

Controversies Concerning DNA Databanks and Laboratories

“Science sell-off dropped,” The Guardian (London) January 12, 2005.

Following protests from Labor, Democrat, MP’s and trade unions, along with police forces, the home office has backed down on plans to create the first privatized forensic science service. The forensic science service is responsible for the National DNA Database.

“DNA Swab Sweep Clash; Cape authorities ignore ACLU protest Boston Herald January 11, 2005.

Even under the pressure to halt the “DNA Dagnet” in the small Cape Town of Truro, police are pressing ahead with the mass DNA collection in hopes that they will be able to find the killer of fashion writer Christa Worthington who was murdered back in 2002.

“Criminal trial set for prison guard; Ex-corrections officer has already settled civil suit over inmate rape,” The Houston Chronicle January 11, 2005.

A former corrections officer, Michael Chaney, is charged with raping an inmate. DNA tests have linked Chaney to the assault. The DNA evidence, however, is highly disputed having been tested at the troubled Houston Crime Lab.

“Justice on hold; As delays in sorting through evidence from the Houston Police Department crime lab continue, the scandal is starting to taint a new administration,” The Houston Chronicle January 9, 2005.

The Houston Crime Lab’s new administration is under fire for not hiring an independent

investigator quickly enough to help sort through about 8,000 mislabeled pieces of evidence.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Crime lab backlog targeted; \$4.4 million for more scientists, test outsourcing should help, says governor,” The Atlanta Journal-Constitution January 12, 2005.

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue announced that he hoped to cut the CBI Crime Lab’s backlog by providing \$4.4 million for more scientists and the outsourcing of some of the work.

“Plan would collect samples of DNA from more felons,” Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska) January 8, 2005.

A bill that will be put forward this year that will require all felons to submit DNA samples to be included in the State and National DNA Database.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“4 men get pardons, clean slates; After serving 10 to 27 years, all cleared by DNA tests,” Chicago Tribune January 7, 2005.

Four Chicago men were pardoned for wrongful convictions. They were all exonerated based on DNA evidence.

“Our Turn; Claims of innocence deserve investigation; Innocent people shouldn't spend years behind bars because of a lack of funding,” San Antonio Express-News (Texas) January 7, 2005.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals are trying to pass legislation that would establish Innocence Projects staffed by university students at each of the 9 state schools. Innocents projects help insure that innocent people are not incarcerated or executed for crimes that they did not commit.

DNA Science and Technology

“State law on police lineups proposed; Avery Task Force, however, can't agree on recording of police interrogations,” Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin) January 7, 2005.

Legislation is being drawn up that will require law enforcement agencies to create new policies on police lineups to help prevent wrongful convictions. The legislation would also include faster DNA testing where there is strong evidence that the prisoner may be innocent.