

DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“Order for DNA sample” The Advertiser (South Australia) April 7, 2005

A paparazzi photographer has been ordered to provide a DNA sample to police in connection to the discovery of an electronic “bug” near the home of actress Nicole Kidman. Jamie Fawcett, 43, has been ordered to provide a sample of his DNA to compare with DNA evidence found on the device.

“DNA evidence leads to arrest of ex-inmate St. Petersburg Times (Florida) April 2, 2005.

John Kelsey Jr., 45, was arrested for a 1993 rape, one month after he was released from prison for assault. A DNA sample taken from Kelsey while he was in prison was compared to the National DNA database and was found to match DNA from the rape in 1993. Police were notified after the “hit” this week and arrested Kelsey.

“DNA nabs burglar” The Nelson Mail (New Zealand) April 7, 2005

James Thomson, an 18-year old Richmond man, was been convicted of burgling an Invercargill Pizza Hut two years after the crime, because his DNA matched a blood sample taken at the scene.

“DNA SWAB SHOULD BE THROWN OUT, LAWYER SAYS; Request could affect case against suspect in rape” Columbus Dispatch (Ohio) April 6, 2005

David Young, defense counsel for Lindsay Bruce, is seeking to throw out DNA evidence linking Bruce to a 5-year old missing girl. Police asked permission of a Municipal Court judge for swabs of Bruce’s genitals, which Young argues was unconstitutional because police had no evidence that Bruce had had sexual contact with the girl.

“REGIONAL ROUNDUP DALLAS: Man sentenced to life in parking-garage rape” The Dallas Morning News April 7, 2005

Andres Mata Jr., 34, a registered sex offender, was sentenced to life in prison Wednesday for the violent sexual assault of a woman in a downtown parking garage. Mata was linked to the attack by DNA recovered from the victim that was then submitted to a national DNA database.

“Man charged with World's End murders” The Scotsman April 1, 2005

A 59-year-old man was charged with the murders of two teenage girls who had been raped and murdered in 1977. The 27-year-old mystery had its first major breakthrough in 1997 when forensic scientists were able to isolate a significant DNA profile with a newly developed test that examined minute traces of fibre, blood, hair and body fluid.

“Scot's rape charge to be dropped” The Herald (Glasgow) April 7, 2005

THE rape charge against a British man who has been kept in a French jail for seven months despite no DNA evidence connecting him to the crime is to be dropped. Craig Orr, 33, has been held in a Toulouse prison -even though his family say that DNA tests conducted more than three months ago do not link him with his alleged victim.

“Man sentenced for woman's rape” Omaha World-Herald (Nebraska) April 1, 2005

Ezekiel F. Burr, 27, was sentenced Tuesday after he pleaded no contest in the rape of a woman near 29th and Jackson Streets. The woman was able to give a detailed description of Burr and detectives matched DNA left at the scene to him.

“DNA matches mean chilling calls to victims; More women forced to relive attacks years later with new science” Chicago Sun-Times April 3, 2005

The national DNA database has swelled to 2.3 million samples as more states, including Illinois, have required convicted felons to provide genetic samples. This has enabled police to solve more cold cases each year, and means changes for people who deal with victims.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Anne Arundel to collect samples for state DNA database; County to help in effort to reduce backlog of convicts not in system” The Baltimore Sun April 6, 2005

Ann Arundel County has joined seven other counties in Maryland in agreeing to collect DNA samples from convicted criminals to be included in the state's DNA database in order to help clean up the state's backlog of convicts who have not yet been sampled. The backlog is estimated at 13,500.

“Watchdog rejects national bank of baby DNA” The Herald (Glasgow) April 1, 2005

The Human Genetics Commission (HGC) and the National Screening Committee rejected a proposal to create a national scheme to take DNA profiles of every baby born in Britain. In a report launched yesterday, they said that genetic profiling of this kind would not be cost-effective at the moment, and that the ethical, legal and social barriers outweigh the medical benefits.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“Court tosses murder verdict” San Antonio Express-News (Texas) April 7, 2005

An appeals court tossed out a 2003 conviction against Ronald Eby for murdering Roland Cervera. A microscopic sample of his DNA was found under Cervera's fingernail. Defense attorney Bobby Barrera argued that the DNA was transferred to Cervera's hands after he used a glove after he that belonged to Eby.

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"Death Sentence Upheld for Inmate Represented by Starr" The Washington Post April 7, 2005

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit upheld the death sentence of Robin Lovitt, 41, who was convicted of murdering a night manager at a pool hall. Kenneth Starr, Lovitt's attorney, argued that Lovitt was denied due process when a court clerk destroyed nearly all the physical evidence in his case, making post-conviction DNA testing impossible.

DNA Science and Technology

"Native Americans use DNA smart card." The Straits Times (Singapore) April 2, 2005

Nearly 35,000 Native American from tribes across the United States have begun using smart cards that hold personal DNA information. The cards are meant to distinguish Native Americans with authentic blood ties from others. The smart card is produced by the American genetic identification systems provider DNAtoday and the British Forensic Science Service.

"Track down a criminal – with his relative's DNA; British police share technique with participants at local security conference" The Straits Times (Singapore) April 2, 2005

British police presented their technique of identifying criminal suspects through a relative's DNA to an audience at the Global Security Asia show at Singapore Expo.

"A Trail of DNA and Data" The Washington Post April 3, 2005

Paul Saffo forecasts the consequences of DNA identification in the future and compares it to its modern day equivalent of identity theft. He argues for the implementation of nationwide technical and policy changes in anticipation of the unique challenges that will accompany the expanded use of biometrics.