

DNA News  
Week of February 27 – March 4, 2006  
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### **DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving**

“DNA implicates inmate in 2003 Norcross killing” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*  
March 2, 2006

Anton Kawan Johnson, 27, is currently serving a 95-year sentence for the murder of two women from Gary Indiana. His DNA was entered into a Databank and has since been matched to DNA collected at a 2003 Norcross, Georgia, crime scene, where a woman was found murdered.

“DNA evidence leads to car arson charge” *The Courier Mail* February 27, 2006

Douglas John Berry, 24, was recently charged with six offences, including counts of arson. Police charge that Berry moved two cars beneath a cluster of gas pipes before setting them on fire. His DNA was found throughout the crime scene.

“Crime lab keeps cranking out 'hits”” *The Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon) March 1, 2006

Late in the summer of 2005, Oregon State Police sent a piece of clothing to its crime lab for DNA testing. The results were the 1,000<sup>th</sup> hit for the Oregon Police Department in solving both new and cold cases, as well as exonerating those wrongly accused and imprisoned.

“Man on Trial in Wife's '78 Killing; Richmond Resident Changes Story, Says Slaying Was an Accident” *The Washington Post* March 1, 2006

Wilbert Abney Jr., 56, is currently on trial for the 1978 rape and murder of his wife, Mona Lisa Abney. In 2004, DNA technology was available to match DNA found at the crime scene to Abney's, who was the police's main suspect. Abney had claimed that he was at home that night and was not involved, though once DNA evidence incriminated him, he alleged it was an accidental strangling during sex with his wife.

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

“DNA database 'not reducing crimes”” *The Daily Telegraph* (London) February 27, 2006

GeneWatch UK, an independent genetic research group, criticized the decision by the Government in Britain and Wales for the recent decision to permanently retain DNA samples from persons not charged with any crime, or have been acquitted of an offense. According to a study conducted by GeneWatch UK, having an expansive DNA databank

does not help to solve crime. In 2004-2005, a year when the DNA Databank expanded, the rate of crimes solved decreased.

### **DNA Database Funding and Backlog**

“Chain of evidence” *The Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon) March 1, 2006

In Oregon, the state’s DNA crime lab has a backlog of evidence from 640 active cases around the state, dating back to May 2005. Police have to wait at least four months to get evidence tested. As investigators rely more and more on DNA evidence and begin to revisit cold cases, the backlog is expected to increase.

### **Expanding the DNA Databank**

“Judge to let DNA tests on youths start” *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, KY) March 2, 2006

Kentucky can begin taking DNA samples from juveniles who have committed felony sex offenses or burglary under a temporary court ruling. The state cannot share the results with federal authorities as it does with DNA from adult offenders until the state judge rules on whether the state law permits expanding the DNA Databank to include juveniles. For now, juvenile DNA is collected and stored separately from adult DNA.

“Surveillance society; Independent evaluation of DNA databases is needed” *The Herald* (Glasgow) February 27, 2006

There is currently a bill in Scotland that, if approved, will allow police to collect and retain DNA samples from innocent people, thereby expanding Scotland’s DNA Databank. In England and Wales, the power to collect DNA from anyone arrested, even if not charged or found innocent, is currently afforded to the police. The DNA Databank has since grown to hold over 3 million permanent samples. Currently, in Scotland, police are required to destroy DNA evidence from those arrested but cleared or not charged.

### **DNA Evidence and Sentencing**

“Attacker of girl, 5, sentenced to 20 years' prison” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Wisconsin) February 27, 2006

Brian J. Homz, 38, was sentenced to 20 years in prison after DNA evidence linked him to the June, 2004 sexual assault of a 5-year-old girl. The DNA also exonerated the girl’s grandfather, whom she was staying with at the time. The young girl is the daughter of Homz’s girlfriend. Earlier that night Homz was rejected romantically by the girl’s mother, which prosecutors believe motivated the assault.

“Nailed by DNA sample he voluntarily gave to cops” *The Straits Times* (Singapore)  
March 2, 2006

In Singapore, a 23-year-old man was interviewed by the police and volunteered his DNA which linked him to 22 counts of rape, including that of a 69-year-old grandmother. He was sentenced to 20 years in jail and 24 strokes of the cane.