

Forensic DNA in the News
Week of April 30 to May 6, 2006
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DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“DNA nails attack dog” *Hobart Mercury* (Australia) May 5, 2006

A woman and her Maltese terrier were attacked by another dog in January. Both the woman and the dog suffered extensive lacerations and bruising from the attack. Two dogs were suspected in the attack but DNA taken from the victim’s clothing helped to identify the guilty dog.

“After 16 years, ex-neighbor arrested in woman’s killing; Missouri City police feel closure in taking custody of a man who was 17 at time of slaying” *The Houston Chronicle* May 3, 2006

Edward George, McGregor, now 33, was 17 when he allegedly sexually assaulted and stabbed his neighbor, Kim Wildman, to death in April, 1990. He is also suspect in two unsolved killings in Houston, Texas. DNA samples taken in Houston were matched to evidence from Missouri City’s cold case files.

“Man found guilty of beating woman to death 18 years ago; Advances in DNA technology were key, prosecutor says” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Wisconsin)

Matthew Knapp, 41, was convicted of the first-degree murder of Resa Scobie Brunner, who was beaten to death with a baseball bat in 1988. Scobie Brunner’s blood was found on two pairs of athletic shoes taken from Knapp, who also had admitted to the murder when threatening his girlfriend with the same fate. Knapp was the last person to be seen with Scobie Brunner before her death.

“Man faces possible life term in ’01 rape, killing; Neighbor bludgeoned in Bolingbrook home” *Chicago Tribune* May 3, 2006 Wednesday

Emerald Ausby, 31, pled guilty to home invasion, criminal sexual assault, armed robbery, and murder in the July 2001 death of Arlinda Paez. One of the murder charges carries a potential life sentence. DNA evidence found at the scene linked Ausby to the sexual assault and murder.

“Admission to murder” *The Daily Telegraph* (Australia) May 6, 2006

Grant John Colb, 28, pled guilty to the brutal murder of David McKeever last May. DNA evidence linked Colb to the scene. Colb and McKeever had been in a relationship five years earlier.

“Federal trial opens in fatal bank robbery attempt” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Missouri) May 4, 2006

The trial of Robert L. Bolden Sr. began this week. Bolden Sr. is charged with ambushing a guard outside a Bank of America branch in St. Louis, Missouri, fatally shooting him. DNA evidence was found in sweat found on a cap and a handkerchief Bolden Sr. was wearing on his head during the assault.

DNA Database Funding and Backlog

“Lab deal on DNA tests” *The Daily Telegraph* (Australia) May 4, 2006

The surge in DNA technology development has overwhelmed Australia’s NSW Police, forcing them to ally with a private laboratory, Genetic Technologies Corporation, to help manage the large backlog of DNA samples. The demand for DNA analysis has exploded from 16,500 samples in 2001 to over 29,700 as of May, 2006.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Officials increase DNA profiles; Collections made before convictions” *USA Today* May 1, 2006

In the United States, Federal and state governments are seeking to add millions of DNA profiles to databases by including genetic information about people who are charged -- but not yet convicted -- of crimes. Currently, DNA is taken and stored after a person is charged with a felony. If acquitted or the charges are dropped, the profile is expunged and the sample is destroyed. If the suspect is convicted, their DNA stays in the database, and can be matched to other crimes in the future. Currently, the federal government, as well as Kansas, New Mexico, California, Louisiana, Minnesota, Texas and Virginia permit DAN testing of arrestees, in an aggressive effort to expand the nation’s Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), a network of state and federal computer indexes. Similar plans are currently under consideration in New York, New Jersey, Michigan, Illinois, and Tennessee.

“New York State Draws Nearer to Collecting DNA in All Crimes, Big and Small” *The New York Times* May 4, 2006

A push to require all convicted criminals in New York to submit their DNA to a central database is gaining crucial support in Albany, where officials say it could create the most comprehensive DNA collection system in the nation. If the proposal becomes law, it would make New York the only state to require collecting DNA from everyone convicted of felonies and misdemeanors, including youthful offenders convicted in criminal court.

“New law closes DNA loophole” *Herald Sun* (Australia) May 5, 2006

A new will close a loophole that prevented compulsory DNA testing of killers found not guilty of murder because of mental impairment. The Australian government said that the law, introduced into Parliament in April, would not be retroactive. Currently, those found not guilty of a crime due to mental impairment are not included in the database. Derek Percy, 57, is a suspected serial killer, though a DNA sample was never taken due to his mental handicap. Police hope this new law will help bring new charges against Percy.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“Free at last; another wrongful conviction is vacated by DNA” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Pennsylvania) May 1, 2006

Drew Whitley, 50, was recently released from prison after spending 18 years wrongly accused of the murder of Noreen Malloy in 1988. DNA in hair found in a stocking mask worn by the murderer did not match that of Mr. Whitley.

DNA Evidence and Sentencing

“Trucker gets life term in case involving rape” *Orlando Sentinel* (Florida) May 2, 2006

Kenneth Malcom Robinson was sentenced Monday to life in prison for trying to arrange the murder of a 13-year-old girl he was accused of raping. The police failed to send his DNA to a laboratory for testing in time for his trial, and due to lack of evidence, Robinson was found not guilty. However, the DNA test was complete for his second trial, and it matched DNA evidence from the rape, and a jury convicted him of that crime as

well. He was sentenced to life in prison after the judge labeled Robinson a habitual offender.

DNA Science and Technology

“Guilty by a handshake? Crime-scene DNA tests may not be as accurate as we are led to believe” *The Herald* (Glasgow) May 2, 2006

Professor Allan Jamieson, director of the Forensic Institute in Edinburgh, recently warned against DNA techniques employed by British police because they may not be specific enough to guarantee a match. “Low Copy Number” (LCN) DNA tests uses fewer match points than any other system currently used in the world. This allows British police to use trace samples of DNA left at a crime scene to match the evidence to a sample, using only six match points instead of the usual ten. However, Jamieson, citing several past “mismatches” warns against the test as too vague.