

Forensic DNA in the news  
Week of May 6 to May 13, 2006  
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**DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving**

“DNA links 3rd player to alleged attack” *Chicago Tribune* May 12, 2006

DNA evidence found under a fake fingernail worn by the alleged victim linked a third Duke lacrosse player to the kidnapping, rape, and sexual assault of a 27-year-old exotic dancer. Two other sophomore lacrosse players were indicted in April, 2006.

“DNA links suspect to assault in Garfield; neighbor charged in woman’s beating” *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland) May 9, 2006

Orlando D. Pendleton, 28, is charged with assault, aggravated burglary, kidnapping, and sexual assault of his 66-year-old neighbor. Based on a description from the victim, police were led to Pendleton. They then asked him for a DNA sample, which matched evidence found on a butter knife, scissors, and a paring knife taken as evidence from the crime scene, all of which were used to threaten the victim.

“DNA ties man to '96 rape” *Daily News* (New York) May 11, 2006 Thursday

Ismael Sanchez, 30, was arrested for the 1996 Queens, NY rape and robbery of a deaf woman. Sanchez was convicted of another crime in 2002 and his DNA was put on file. Later, his DNA was matched to the evidence from the 1996 rape.

“Cold Case arrest made in '05 killing; Career criminal charged in home invasion death” *Buffalo News* (New York) May 13, 2006

John Monk, 57, has been in custody at the Erie County Correctional Facility since January, 2006 for a parole violation. Recently the Buffalo Police Cold Case Squad matched his DNA to evidence found at the scene of a break in and murder that had since gone cold.

“Santa Ana Man is found guilty of a series of nighttime rapes, robberies, assaults at parks” *Los Angeles Times* May 11, 2006

Francisco Rene Hernandez, 38, was convicted of 35 felony counts of rape, robbery, kidnapping and aggravated assault. DNA evidence found at the crime scenes linked Hernandez to each crime, which had similar attack patterns as well.

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

“The DNA Files” *Independent on Sunday* (London) May 7, 2006

The DNA database in Britain is the largest in the world, with over 3 million samples of DNA, including the DNA of over 50,000 children who have committed no offence. Police admitted that this estimate does not include an additional 27,000 people who are now adults but whose DNA was entered into the database when they were children. Ministers of Parliament recently called for the removal of all genetic samples of innocent people, including those children whose DNA is on file. A year ago, police were given the power to hold DNA samples from anyone suspected of an offence, not just those convicted.

“Police lab tailored tests to theories, report says; Investigators hope to establish whether mistakes were deliberate” *The Houston Chronicle* May 12, 2006

During an ongoing probe into the Houston Police Department’s crime lab, special investigators found that lab analysts skewed reports to fit police theories in several cases. Furthermore, in over 20 cases examined, investigators concluded that analysts failed to report the results of blood-typing and DNA test that did not implicate the suspects police had identified. The investigative team could not determine whether the failure to report stemmed from analysts’ lack of confidence in their ability to obtain reliable results or a conscious manipulation of the results.

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

“Law and Order: Elkins to get rest of settlement” *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland) May 10, 2006

Clarence Elkins was wrongfully imprisoned for almost seven years in Ohio. He will receive \$40,330 for each year that he was wrongfully imprisoned. Additionally, he won a case in the Ohio Court of Claims to be repaid lost wages and legal fees, amounting to \$1.07 million.

**DNA Science and Technology**

“Wider use of DNA lists is urged in fighting crime” *The New York Times* May 12, 2006  
Friday

A team of scientists at Harvard University proposed that DNA databases contain enough information to identify many criminals whose DNA has not been catalogued through their kinship to people already represented. This could be done by a method developed to identify victims in the World Trade Center attacks and other disasters. Currently, the FBI’s DNA database can only be searched for exact matches to DNA evidence found at crime scenes. With slight modifications, it could be search for close relatives as well. Frederick Bieber and David Lazer’s article in *Science* says that genetic surveillance will thus shift from the individual to the family.