

DNA Evidence and Crime -Solving

“Long Beach rapist sentenced,” Newsday (New York) February 11, 2005.

Leslie Maize, 63, was sentenced to 6-12 years in prison for a rape he committed 12 years ago, after he was forced to provide a DNA sample while on probation in 2000. Maize’s DNA profile was also matched to 3 unsolved rapes in New York City, but could not be prosecuted because they had exceeded the statute of limitations.

“In Murder Prosecution, Still No Trace of Boy's Body,” The Washington Post February 13, 2005.

County prosecutors are preparing their murder case against Herman L. Black for the murder of a 3 year-old boy, his girlfriend’s son. Prosecutors are planning to use DNA evidence and circumstantial evidence alone to gain the conviction because the child’s body has never been found.

“N.O. man pleads guilty to robbery, burglary; Two others charged in St. Charles holdup,” Times-Picayune (New Orleans) February 12, 2005.

After DNA tests were run on blood that was found at a house where an armed robber forced his way in as he was fleeing scene of the robbery, the man, Donald Fields was apprehended and charged with the crime.

“Serial attacker luring women with ride offer,” The Advertiser February 12, 2005.

Police have appealed for help from the public to catch a man who has been luring women into his car and sexually assaulting them over the past eight years. At least five women have been assaulted and DNA evidence has linked the attacks to the same man.

“DNA Leads to Jailed Burglar,” Daily News (New York) February 17, 2005.

William Rowe, 33, has pleaded guilty to breaking and entering to a sexual assault and robbery. Rowe was in prison for another robbery when his DNA profile was matched to the crime.

“Rape Suspect Hunted; Police, FBI Agents Sweep Metro Area for Sex Offender,” Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) February 17, 2005.

Police are searching the metro area for Brent J. Brents, a registered sex offender who has been linked to five rapes in 4 days. Brents was linked to all the crimes through DNA

evidence, his profile being on record through previous sex assault charged for which he spent 15 years in prison.

“Great-grandmother's killer caught out by cigarette DNA,” The Australian February 16, 2005.

DNA from saliva left on a cigarette butt has not only linked Clarence White to the murder of an 81-year-old grandmother, but it has also forced him to change his plea to guilty. The NSW Supreme Court Judge Timothy Studdert has ruled that the DNA collected from the cigarette without White’s knowledge could in fact be used in the murder trial.

“No weapon, motive yet in Marton probe,” The New Zealand Herald February 16, 2005.

Six weeks after Mona Morriss, 83, was murdered, police are still searching for a suspect. Police have been canvassing the surrounding neighborhoods talking to people and are asking for voluntary DNA samples.

Controversies Concerning DNA Databanks and Laboratories

“Across our region,” The Indianapolis Star February 12, 2005.

Lt. Col. Michael Medler, an Indiana State Police official has been chosen to head up the Marion County Crime lab which has been under investigation for mismanagement.

“DNA taken without asking,” The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia) February 15, 2005.

Clarence White, a man accused of murdering an 81-year-old woman in 2003, is applying to have the DNA evidence against him dismissed because his DNA was taken without his knowledge. DNA from White was taken from a cigarette butt that he discarded at the police station where he was being questioned in an unrelated investigation. The DNA left on the cigarette matched DNA that was found beneath the victim’s fingernails.

“Tests find HPD's lab data wrong once again; New DNA exam indicates errors in 1997 murder case,” The Houston Chronicle February 16, 2005,

An independent crime lab has found DNA test results in a 1997 murder case were inaccurate. Robert Lee Wallace was convicted of murder in 1997 based on DNA evidence that was tested at the now discredited Houston Police Departments crime lab. The case resurfaced amidst the ongoing effort to retest hundreds of cases that were originally handled by the HPD’s crime lab.

Expanding the DNA Databank

Week of February 11-17, 2005
Prepared by Rebecca Mitcheson

“Hundreds caught in DNA net,” The Advertiser (Australia) February 11, 2005.

Due to the Australian Government’s decision to expand DNA testing in new legislation that was passed in 2003, 250 people have been charged with 952 offenses in the past year. 159 of those were inmates at the time of their arrests.

“Police chiefs back regional DNA labs,” The Houston Chronicle February 16, 2005,

In the six largest cities in the State of Texas, police chiefs have all agreed to support regional DNA laboratories, taking DNA forensics out of the hands of local law enforcement agencies.