

DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“Man sentenced in child rape” Orlando Sentinel (Florida) May 17, 2005

Eric Rudicil was sentenced Monday to 47 years in prison for the kidnapping and rape of a 3-year-old girl/ Rudicil was arrested in December 2003 in the Aug. 13, 2000, attack after it was discovered that his genetic information matched DNA collected at the crime scene.

“Composer gets 25-year prison term for rape of boy” The San Diego Union-Tribune May 17, 2005

Brett Taniela Bohart, 28, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for kidnapping and raping a 13-year-old boy nine years ago. Bohart was arrested Oct. 6 after investigators linked him to the attack through DNA testing. He gave a sample of his DNA to authorities in 2003 after being convicted of assault stemming from a road rage incident

“His DNA linked to '96 rapes” Daily News (New York) May 15, 2005

A DNA MATCH has led to the arrest of Leroy Johnson, 38, in the vicious 1996 rape of two roommates in Greenwich Village. The case was solved after DNA from the victims' rape kits was tested as part of the NYPD's successful Project Backlog. The project has been comparing DNA collected in about 17,000 unsolved sexual assault cases with DNA in a new database made up of samples taken from convicted felons.

“State's crime rate falls dramatically” The Advertiser (South Australia) May 14, 2005

Since January, 2004, using DNA evidence, police have charged 404 people with a total of 1484 offences relating to 725 separate incidents. Of those charged, 245 were serving prisoners at the time of arrest. Premier Mike Rann said the testing of prisoners had helped progress more than 600 serious criminal trespass cases as well as 25 rapes, 16 robberies and three arson cases.

“Student arrested in rape” San Antonio Express-News May 14, 2005

Jason Bruce Letbetter, 27, was charged with aggravated sexual assault for the rape of a 12-year-old in a campus bathroom last month. DNA found on the victim matched Letbetter's DNA, which was registered in CODIS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory's DNA index system.

“DNA links Quisi Bryan to rapes” Plain Dealer (Cleveland) May 13, 2005

Quisi Bryan, already on death row for killing Cleveland police officer Wayne Leon in June 2000, now faces two counts of rape after his indictment Thursday. Cleveland police and a state crime laboratory recently matched Bryant's DNA to two unsolved 1994 rapes.

“T-shirt, hunch led to arrest; DNA lead heats up cold case of boynton killing” Sun-Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL) May 13, 2005

At the time of Thomas Villano's murder in 2000, technology wasn't advanced enough to match the sweat and skin cells on a T-shirt found at the scene of the crime. Investigators had always suspected the shirt belonged to former Villano employee Nicholas Agatheas, 26, but couldn't prove it until recently, when the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office matched DNA on the shirt with Agatheas's genetic material.

DNA Database Funding and Backlog

“Police receive grant for cold-case testing” Chicago Tribune May 19, 2005

The Police Department has received a grant to cover the cost of detectives conducting DNA tests on evidence from cold murder cases. The 3-year, \$455,301 grant from the National Institute of Justice, will allow detectives to review 125 unsolved murder cases in a city that has had 376 homicides since 1959.

“Crime lab shows evidence of slow progress” The Boston Herald May 13, 2005

Officials predict it will take five to seven years before DNA testing can be turned around in 30 days rather than the current rate of up to 15 months. Although the state will double the 12 DNA chemists within a year and plans to build a new crime lab capable of meeting all the commonwealth's forensic testing needs, it would take 80 scientists alone to handle the massive requests for DNA testing.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Brown-Waite supports sex offender bill” St. Petersburg Times (Florida) May 19, 2005

U.S. Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite joined U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, R-West Palm Beach, and Sen. Orrin Hatch on Wednesday to propose a bill that would tighten federal sex offender laws. The bill includes a measure to create a federal sex offender DNA database.

“Police lament insufficient DNA database” New Straits Times (Malaysia) May 13, 2005

Only 581 people have been profiled in the Malaysia police's DNA database in the last two years, due to the lack of a law permitting police to collect inmate DNA samples. The profiles, from samples gathered from scenes of murder and violent crimes, included those of victims. A draft of the proposed DNA Identification Act was submitted to the Internal Security Ministry's Senior Federal Counsel in Nov 2003, and has yet to be tabled in Parliament.

“All MPs support DNA bill; forces killers to give samples” The Toronto Sun May 13, 2005

All political parties gave unanimous consent to ram the DNA bill through the House of Commons yesterday. The bill expands the authority to retroactively order collection of DNA from those convicted of murder, manslaughter or serious sex assaults.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“Law & order” Plain Dealer (Cleveland) May 18, 2005

A judge has denied a request by the Ohio Innocence Project for more sophisticated DNA tests on evidence in the murder of Dr. Margo Prade. Douglas Prade is serving a life sentence after he was convicted in 1998 of shooting his wife on Nov. 26, 1997.

“Judge who denied DNA test must explain” St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri) May 18, 2005

On Tuesday, the Missouri Court of Appeals stated that Circuit Judge Jimmie Edwards had to explain a ruling that denied DNA testing to Rodney Clayton. Clayton, who was convicted of first degree murder in 1991, is seeking a test of whether DNA from sperm found on the victim was his.

“Inmate says DNA should absolve him” Chicago Tribune May 13, 2005

Juan Rivera, 32, asked a judge for a new trial Thursday, saying recent DNA testing exonerates him of the sexual assault and murder of an 11-year-old girl. DNA evidence in semen taken from the girl’s body does not belong to Rivera. The state's attorney's office opposes the new trial request but is continuing with DNA testing of the evidence. They note that police said Rivera said that he did not ejaculate during the crime.

DNA Science and Technology

“Mobile DNA lab piloted” The Guardian (London) - Final Edition May 14, 2005

A mobile forensic laboratory that allows DNA evidence to be analyzed at the scene of a crime will begin working today. Police hope it will give detectives access to DNA information in eight hours. The vehicle is designed by the Forensic Science Service (FSS). Using satellite links, scientists in the vehicle will be able to compare finger and shoe prints with the FSS's databases. DNA samples from blood or sperm will be analyzed and compared with the national database, which holds profiles of 3 million people.