

DNA News
Week of April 3 - April 9, 2006
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DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“Girl’s sex assault case solved 21 years later” *The Dallas Morning News* April 6, 2006

Lavinia Masters, then 13 years old, was sexually assaulted at knifepoint in 1985. Masters, then 13, was threatened by her assailant that if she were to tell anyone, he would come back and kill her. She had been living with that fear for 21 years before Dallas police matched DNA evidence from her case with DNA from a convicted felon in Texas’s DNA Databank. This is the first success story of the Dallas Police Department’s sexual assault cold case program.

“’93 Yonkers slay cracked by DNA” *Daily News* (New York) April 6, 2006

Twelve years later, DNA lab results from the Westchester County Forensics Lab helped to solve a murder from 1993 that had since gone cold. Troy Cartwright, 42, was charged with the stabbing murder of a young Yonkers woman, Deborah Cobb. Cartwright is currently serving a sentence for an unrelated crime, which is why police had his DNA on file.

“DNA links man to stabbings in 1980” *The Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon) April 5, 2006

The July 1980 murder of Casper and Otilia Volk of Lake Oswego, Oregon, was finally solved when DNA evidence matched a DNA sample from Ryan Lawrence Anthony, 48, who was once married to the victims’ granddaughter.

“Man’s rape confession” *The Advertiser* (Australia) April 4, 2006

Peter John Macpherson, 45, plead guilty to five counts of rape, one count of abduction and one count of threatening to cause harm. DNA evidence linked Macpherson to the crimes occurring in 1995 and was arrested in 2004. Sentencing will occur next month.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Doyle signs sex offender bill allowing life term” *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (Wisconsin) April 7, 2006

Jim Doyle, the Democratic governor from Wisconsin, recently signed Assembly bill 569, which expands the list of criminals who must give DNA samples to the state's crime lab. People convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault, exposing themselves to children or forcing children to expose themselves, will now be included in the state's DNA databank. He also signed a bill into law that would allow judges to hand down life sentences for twice-convicted first degree sex offenders.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“Slain girl’s body exhumed; Truscott hopes DNA tests on remains from 1959 will clear him.” *The Toronto Sun* April 7, 2006

The body of 12-year-old Lynne Harper was exhumed in hopes that DNA evidence will point to the person responsible for her 1959 rape and murder. Stephen Truscott, then 14 years old, was convicted and sentenced to hang in 1959 for the crime, though his sentence was reduced and he was freed on parole in 1969. The case was labeled a “miscarriage of justice” which is now being rectified.

DNA Evidence and Sentencing

“Man convicted of murder in woman's fatal stabbing” *The Toronto Star*, April 3, 2006

Mathiyalagan Selvanayagam, 27, was convicted of the murder and sexual assault of a Scarborough mother of two. Drops of blood were found at the scene which were later matched to Selvanayagam’s DNA. The second-degree murder conviction automatically mandates a life sentence.

“Life sentence for Aurora man in ’03 rape of teen” *Chicago Tribune* April 6, 2006

Antonio Kendricks, 33, was sentenced to life in prison for the 2003 rape of a 16-year old girl. Saliva found on the victim’s body matched a DNA sample Kendricks provided.