

DNA News
Week of April 23 – April 29, 2006
Prepared by Alice Sodroski

DNA Evidence and Crime-Solving

“Woman pleads guilty to raping underage cousin” *The Columbus Dispatch* (Ohio) April 29, 2006

Twyana Davis, 30, who was convicted of child endangerment in 1995 for leaving her baby in a trash can was charged with the rape of her underage cousin, who DNA results show is the father of the abandoned child. She pled guilty to the charges and will be sentenced in July to five to twenty-five years in prison.

“Raped stole for games: Sex attack confession” *Daily News* (New York) April 29, 2006

Jauan Griffith, 27, confessed to attacking Queens residents after breaking into their homes to steal money to buy video games. These attacks started in 1995 and continued until 2004, with DNA connecting Griffith to each of the four attacks.

“Serial sex attacker, 15, admits raping girl in Sainsbury's” *The Daily Telegraph* (London) April 29, 2006

A 15-year-old boy was charged with raping an 11 year-old girl in the bathroom of a department store in London. The 15-year-old admitted to the assault as well as four other assaults on women aged 28 to 47. DNA was found on a condom wrapper found in the bathroom stall and the boy was seen both entering and leaving the store in surveillance video during the time of the alleged assault.

“Prop. 69 DNA Rule Leads to O.C. Rape Charges” *Los Angeles Times* April 29, 2006

Mustafa Tarin is charged with the 2000 rape of a 14-year-old girl after his DNA sample stored in the California DNA Database was a match for evidence from the crime. Tarin is one of the first arrests as a result of Proposition 69, which mandates that all adults arrested for sexual offences, suspicion of murder, and felonies. Tarin was arrested in 2005 and charged with drug trafficking. His DNA was stored in the database, which led to his arrest in this case.

“Stepdad's trial set in slaying of girl” *Chicago Tribune* April 28, 2006

Laurence Lovejoy, 38, is charged with the March 2004 rape and murder of his 16-year-old stepdaughter, Erin Justice. Lovejoy is accused of poisoning, stabbing, and drowning his stepdaughter to keep her from testifying against him in a sexual assault case. Evidence against Lovejoy includes his DNA and other forensic evidence from the crime scene.

“German woman (40) accused of killing nine of her babies.” *The Irish Times* April 28, 2006

Sabine Hilschenz, a 40-year-old unemployed woman appeared in a German court accused of killing nine babies shortly after giving birth to them and hiding their bodies in terracotta flowerpots from 1988-1998. The skeletons of the children were discovered by a neighbor clearing out the garden. DNA matched each of the remains to Hilschenz and her husband.

“‘Ponytail Bandit’ confesses to 1985 rape; Attack in Lafourche shows **DNA** match” *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans) April 28, 2006

Michael Sterkins, 53, who pled guilty to attacking three women in cemeteries to get their hair has confessed to a 1985 rape after his DNA was matched to the crime through the DNA database. Sterkins is currently serving 30 years in a Louisiana prison for battery, kidnapping, and attempted rape charges for the previous attacks.

“DNA links pair to decade-old sex assaults; Suspects currently serving sentences for unrelated crimes” *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, CO) April 27, 2006

DNA evidence has helped Denver police link two men to two separate sexual assaults from a decade ago. Prosecutors charged Lavone Barron, 51, and Guillermo Barron-Baca, 30, in connection with the crimes. Barron’s DNA was stored in Colorado’s DNA database while he was serving 48 years in prison for burglary. His DNA was a match for evidence found at the scene of a 1996 sexual attack. Barron-Baca is charged kidnapping and sexual assault in connection with a 1996 attack on a 33-year-old woman. Barron-Baca is currently served a 48 year sentence for an unrelated sexual assault. His DNA, which was taken while in prison, was linked to the evidence in the 1996 attack.

Expanding the DNA Databank

“Move under way to set up DNA database of criminals” *New Straits Times* (Malaysia) April 28, 2006

Efforts are underway to set up a national DNA database in Kuala Lumpur, which will eventually be expanded to cover all Malaysians. Deputy Internal Security Minister Datuk Fu Ah Kiow is aware of the legal implications and assures that the government would find ways to extract DNA evidence without infringing on the privacy rights of individuals.

“Top court upholds gathering of DNA” *The Toronto Star* April 28, 2006

Canada’s high court ruled 4-3 in favor of taking DNA samples from convicted dangerous or sexual offenders, saying their claim to privacy must give way to the greater public interest.

DNA-based Post Conviction Challenges

“2nd DNA Test to free man jailed in slaying, Convicted in 1988 killing at McDonald’s near Kennywood” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Pennsylvania) April 26, 2006

Drew Whitley was sentenced to prison for life in the 1988 murder of McDonald's night manager Noreen Malloy. After 18 years in prison, prosecutors are prepared to free the him after a second round of **DNA** tests indicated he was not responsible for the killing. Whitley’s second-degree murder conviction was overturned and he was granted a new trial.

DNA Evidence and Sentencing

“Two life terms in '89 rape, murder; DNA link turned up after Fulton squad revived case” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* April 27, 2006

Larry Walker was sentenced to two life terms in prison for the attack and rape of 21-year-old JoAnne Hankamer in 1989. He was 16 at the time of the attack. Walker was previously in prison for marijuana possession where his DNA was taken and placed in the DNA database at the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. He was charged with Hankamer’s murder after the Fulton County cold case squad matched his DNA to the evidence from the attack.