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DNA evidence from previously untested Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Kit results in indictment of 56-year-old man

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that as part of the ongoing Untested Sexual Assault Kit Project, a grand jury has indicted 56-year-old Richard Timothy Ward for the alleged rape of a 21 year old female that occurred in January 1997.

This is seventh case to be indicted under the Multnomah County District Attorney's Untested Sexual Assault Kit Project.

The indictment charges Ward with one count of rape in the first degree and two counts of sodomy in the first degree.

It is alleged in court documents that Ward unlawfully and knowingly, by forcible compulsion, engaged in sexual intercourse with the victim on or about January 27, 1997 in Multnomah County. On August 22, 2017, Ward was identified as the perpetrator of the alleged crimes using a DNA sample comparison, according to the indictment.

The victim in this case does not want media contact and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is requesting media respect her privacy.

According to court documents, the alleged incident occurred in Portland, Oregon and was reported to the Portland Police Bureau in 1997.

When the alleged crimes occurred, law enforcement, despite investigative follow up, was unable to identify a suspect. The identification of Ward was made through DNA testing as part of the Untested Sexual Assault Kit Project. Ward's DNA profile was not in the national law enforcement database at the time of the alleged offense.

When the warrant in this case was issued on April 17, 2019, Ward was in-custody in Arkansas on an unrelated criminal matter. It is unknown when he will be extradited to Oregon.

Due to the ongoing investigation, the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is not able to provide any additional details on this case.

An indictment is only an accusation of a crime. Ward is innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project

In 2015, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill, along with the Portland Police Bureau, Gresham Police Department, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police Forensic Laboratory collaboratively initiated a project to process thousands of untested Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) kits in Multnomah, Marion and Lane counties.

District Attorney Underhill and others quickly identified funding from the [New York County District Attorney's Office \(DANY\)](#) and worked collectively with the Portland Police Bureau's Sex Crimes Unit after the City of Portland received a grant from [U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance's \(BJA\) Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Grant Program](#).

[DANY awarded](#) the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office a total of \$1,995,453 in September 2015. Using those funds, a coordinated effort involving local law enforcement and the Oregon State Police was launched to send SAFE kits, dated 2014 or older from Multnomah, Lane and Marion counties, to a private lab in Utah for testing.

Under the DANY grant, nearly 3,000 sexual assault kits from around the state of Oregon were tested.

In 2018, Oregon became one of the first five states in the country to clear its backlog of Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) kits.

In Oregon, Senate Bill 1571, known as "Melissa's Law," was the Oregon Legislature's response to ensuring all sexual assault kits, except for anonymous kits, are sent to the Oregon State Crime Laboratory for timely testing.

The Portland Police Bureau's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Workgroup, which was created in 2015, is comprised of victim-centered and trauma-informed members of the Portland Police Bureau and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office.

Current Multnomah County SAFE kit criminal cases (as of April 25, 2019)

State of Oregon vs Jihad Eldeen Moore - 18CR13996 – Convicted Oct. 31, 2018
State of Oregon vs Chanh Van Tran - 18CR25167 - Convicted in November 2018
State of Oregon vs Curtis Clint Williams - 17CR37474 - Convicted in June 2018
State of Oregon vs Steven Guy Tubbs - 17CR08640 - Convicted in August 2018
State of Oregon vs Jose Oscar Rosales - 17CR29317 - Convicted in February 2018
State of Oregon vs Ricky Alexander Harrison - 18CR59141 - Pending arraignment
State of Oregon vs Richard Timothy Ward - 19cr25495 - Pending arraignment

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