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For Immediate Release

Contact: [Steve Walker](#), (619) 531-3890
[Tanya Sierra](#), (619) 531-3315
En Español [Barbara Medina](#), (619) 531-3305

Cold Case Rape and Murder Solved 25 Years Later Using Familial DNA Testing

Rare DNA Test Helped Law Enforcement Zero in on the Killer

The [San Diego County District Attorney's Office](#) announced today that a 25-year old cold case has been solved after familial DNA testing provided investigators with key information that solved the murder of 84-year old Angela Kleinsorge. The victim was found raped and murdered in her San Diego home in February of 1992. She died from multiple stab wounds to the neck area. At the time, regular DNA testing did not match any individuals in a statewide offender database.

In July of 2016, the case was submitted by the San Diego Police Department and the District Attorney's Office to the Department of Justice with a request for familial DNA testing. Familial DNA searches allow investigators to search offender databases with wider parameters, identifying people who are likely to be close relatives of the person who may have committed a crime. The familial DNA results from Kleinsorge's murder matched a convicted offender who was deceased. However, the familial DNA typing results showed there was a high likelihood that Kleinsorge's murderer was a brother of that deceased convict.

It was determined through further investigation there was one living brother and another brother who was killed in a motorcycle accident. SDPD was able to obtain DNA samples from the living brother and he was eliminated as a suspect. SDPD Lab Criminalist Adam Dutra received tissue samples from the coroner from the other brother, Jeffrey Falls, who was killed in the motorcycle accident in 2006 at the age of 42. The crime lab was able to obtain a partial DNA profile from the deceased suspect's tissue that matched the crime scene sample, pointing to Falls as the murderer. The likelihood ratio for kinship between the crime scene sample and Falls is in the quadrillions, further evidence that investigators had solved the case.

"The results of this testing has brought a measure of closure to the victim's family more than two decades after her murder," said San Diego District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. "While familial DNA testing remains fairly rare in the U.S., this is an excellent example of how law enforcement can use the science as a way to propel an investigation forward and solve more crimes."

“To murder another person is one of the most despicable crimes imaginable,” said Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman. “When it happens, our homicide unit works tirelessly to identify, apprehend, and hold accountable those responsible for committing this unthinkable crime. I would like to thank Cold Case Detective Holly Irwin who worked tirelessly in collaboration with the District Attorney’s Office and the California Department of Justice to identify Angela Kleinsorge’s killer who remained unknown for over two decades. It’s her relentless pursuit for justice that the family and our community can now find peace knowing this case has been solved.”

Familial search requests received from law enforcement agencies are evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the California DOJ’s Familial Search Committee following a rigorous protocol. Approval for Familial Searching is limited to cases involving major violent crimes for which there is a serious public safety risk and all other investigative leads have been exhausted. Since 2008, the California Department of Justice has received 134 cases for familial searching, conducted 172 searches, and identified eight Familial Search hits.

“Familial DNA Searching represents a significant advancement in forensic investigative tools available to law enforcement,” said California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. “It can play a critical role in solving crimes, especially decades-old cold cases that could not be solved by the forensic techniques employed at that time. This technology goes a long way to giving victim’s families the closure they deserve.”

The technique represents a frontier in the evolving world of forensic science. Familial DNA searching was pioneered in the U.K, helping in 2002 in what was believed to be the first conviction using the technique. In 2008, California became the first state in the U.S. to authorize the testing, and Colorado followed a year later. It has now been used in at least eight other states.

California has solved several cases using familial searching, including the so-called Grim Sleeper case in Los Angeles. A serial killer preyed on vulnerable women and eluded identification for decades until investigators matched crime scene DNA to the killer’s son, whose DNA was in an offender database.

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