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**For Immediate Release**

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# **Ex-Convict Sentenced for Cold Case Sexual Assault in Pacific Beach Alley**

## ***John House Attacked Woman From Behind as She Walked Down Street***

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that a 53-year-old man, who attacked a woman from behind in 2001 and dragged her into a Pacific Beach alley, forcing her to have sex with him, has been sentenced to 15 years-to-life in prison.

After deliberating for one day, a jury found John House guilty last November of forcible oral copulation as well as a kidnapping allegation.

“The victim waited more than 20 years for this defendant to be brought to justice for his horrific kidnap and sexual assault,” DA Stephan said. “Through the tireless work of specialized prosecutors and investigators in our Cold Case and Sex Crimes Units along with our law enforcement partners, we are able to solve these crimes that leave victims and their families living in fear and looking behind their shoulder for years.”

On a late morning in August 2001, the victim was walking down a Pacific Beach street when the defendant approached her from behind, put his hand over her mouth and dragged her into an alley to have sex while threatening her with a knife. Given the limitations of the DNA technology at the time, the San Diego Police Department Crime Laboratory was unable to develop a DNA profile from the sperm fraction collected from victim’s lips and the case went cold.

In 2022 there was a break in the case thanks to developments in DNA testing technology and retesting of the evidence. A full DNA profile was developed, which matched the defendant. It turned out he was involved in previous incidents, including a criminal case from 2001. In that case, defendant House approached five different female joggers from behind and sexually battered them, resulting in a prison sentence of seven years.

The DA’s Cold Case Homicide Division has dedicated and experienced investigators and prosecutors who use the latest forensic evidence technology to deliver justice to victims. The division promotes public safety by working with local law enforcement to resolve unsolved homicides within San Diego County. These partnerships are key to solving and successfully

prosecuting cases where the trail has gone cold for years. Since it was established in 2003, the Cold Case Homicide Division has played a role in solving and prosecuting numerous murders.

Deputy District Attorney Zachary Wallace prosecuted this case.

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*About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office*

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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