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January 4, 2024  
For Immediate Release

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# Rapist Sentenced to 130 Years-to-Life for Crimes Committed More than 24 Years Ago

## *Defendant Eventually Identified Through Genealogical DNA*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) said today that defendant Mark Thompson Hunter, 66, was sentenced to 130 years-to-life in state prison for kidnapping and raping a teenage girl multiple times on February 17, 1999 in Escondido. Judge Robert Kearney handed down the lengthy sentence after Hunter was convicted by a jury in October of last year of seven felony counts including kidnapping, rape, and sodomy.

“The victim was 19-years old when she was brutally attacked by this defendant and put through a nightmare scenario,” said DA Stephan. “Justice was delayed, but thanks to investigators at the FBI, Sheriff’s Crime Lab, Escondido Police Department and District Attorney’s Office, who leveraged the power of modern DNA and never gave up, this rapist is now being held accountable for his crimes.”

The victim was approached around 8:30 p.m. at a gas station by a man asking her for directions. She agreed to show him the exact location by having him follow her car in his van. When the victim got to an area near Valley Parkway and Fig Street, the man waved her into a parking lot. The attacker then pulled her into his van and drove her to a dead-end street.

The victim fought back but was out matched by the attacker’s size and strength. She was raped multiple times and then released with the suspect taking off. Despite the attacker's DNA being recovered by a forensic medical exam, available DNA testing at the time did not match any individuals in a statewide offender database. In 2020, a cold case team re-examined the DNA, and using genealogical DNA technology, investigators linked it to Hunter who was living in Hemet, California when he was arrested.

“Investigative genealogy techniques have truly revolutionized how law enforcement agencies can pursue justice,” said FBI San Diego Special Agent in Charge Stacey Moy. “The FBI, along with our partners, have a steadfast commitment to the pursuit of justice for victims of crimes and their families. Technological advancements allow us to have more successful investigations, despite the passage of time.”

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. 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.

In 2016, a 25-year-old cold case was 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.

Deputy District Attorney Claudia Plascencia 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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