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PENNSYLVANIA MAN SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON
FOR RAPE OF FAR ROCKAWAY WOMAN

Apprehended In New Jersey Prison As A Result Of DNA "Cold Hit"

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown announced today that a Pennsylvania man who was serving a five-year prison sentence in New Jersey on drug charges and was scheduled to appear before the parole board there when he was arrested by New York authorities has been sentenced to 25 years in prison for the 1996 rape of a 51-year-old Far Rockaway woman. The arrest and subsequent conviction was based on DNA evidence which the defendant had submitted after the New Jersey conviction and was positively matched with the DNA from this incident.

District Attorney Brown said, "DNA evidence that was collected from the rape victim at the time of the incident and stored all this time in a national database known as CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) was able to convict this defendant and subsequently send him to prison for a considerable length of time. This case underscores yet again the crucial importance of DNA evidence which is irrefutable proof of guilt or innocence."

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Curtis Clinkscales, 36, formerly of Pittston, Pennsylvania. He was extradited in 2007 from the Bayside State Prison in Trenton, New Jersey, where he was completing a five-year sentence on drug charges. The defendant was convicted last month of first-degree rape, sodomy and sexual abuse before Queens Supreme Court Justice Gregory L. Lasak, who imposed today's determinate sentence of 25 years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the trial testimony, the victim was walking home from the Far Rockaway train station early on the morning of January 10, 1996, when the defendant came up behind her with his hands in his pockets and, in asking for money, demanded that she open her jacket so he could see for himself if she had anything. Afraid, she did as he instructed and he began fondling her breasts and told her to "be quiet and don't be stupid" and then to "come with him and don't scream." He then led her to a nearby parking lot and down several steps where he forcibly sexually abused and raped her despite her pleas to take her money and leave her alone. Before fleeing, he told her "not to call the cops, not to look back or scream." The victim immediately went home to her husband and notified the police who took her to a local Queens hospital where medical personnel prepared a sexual assault evidence kit, which included DNA evidence recovered from the victim.

The District Attorney said that the sexual assault evidence kit was tested as part of the City's Backlog Project which is an initiative that reopens sexual assault cases in which perpetrators have been identified using DNA from rape kits that are matched with convicted felony offender DNA profiles on file with New York and national DNA databanks.

Assistant District Attorney Jared Rosenblatt, of the District Attorney's Special Victims Bureau, prosecuted the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Marjory D. Fisher, Bureau Chief, and Kenneth M. Appelbaum and Lucinda C Suarez, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Major Crimes Charles A. Testagrossa and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Daniel S. Saunders.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.