



December 7, 2023

## G.O.L.D. Unit Identifies Three Cold-Case Sexual Assault Offenders Utilizing Genealogy

CLEVELAND – Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office's (CCPO) G.O.L.D. Unit (Genetic Operations Linking DNA) has identified suspects John Doe #103, John Doe #10, and John Doe #161 utilizing forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) and CODIS Familial searching.

"Our G.O.L.D. Unit continues to work with our law enforcement partners to bring justice to the victims of cold-case sexual assault cases," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "I am proud of the great work the G.O.L.D. Unit has done and I hope these three indictments can help these six victims find some semblance of closure."

### Forensic Genetic Genealogy

#### John Doe #103

On September 15, 2000, the 72-year-old female victim, who was homeless at the time, was standing under the Detroit-Superior bridge. Kenneth Edmond, currently 62, approached the victim, shoved her to the ground, and sexually assaulted her. After the sexual assault, Edmond fled the scene. The victim walked around asking for help. A good Samaritan assisted her and called the police. The Cleveland Division of Police (CDP) responded to the scene and the victim was transported to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

On October 30, 2001, the 21-year-old female victim was walking near East 9th Street and Carnegie Avenue in Cleveland. Edmond approached the victim, grabbed her by the neck, and forced her through an opening in a fence under the I-90 bridge. Edmond proceeded to sexually assault the victim multiple times. After the sexual assaults, Edmond stole money from the victim's purse and then fled the scene. The victim flagged down a nearby good Samaritan who assisted her to the Cleveland State University Police Station. From there, she was transported to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

The same unique male DNA profile was developed from both victims' sexual assault kits but did not produce any leads in CODIS. The DNA profile was then indicted as "John Doe #103" to ensure that the statute of limitations did not expire. John Doe #103 was charged with the following:

- **Three counts of Rape**
- **Three counts of Kidnapping**
- **One count of Robbery**



The CCPO and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation's DNA lab (BCI), reviewed the DNA evidence in 2022 for potential forensic genetic genealogy. The DNA profile for John Doe #103 was submitted to Gene by Gene. Investigative genetic genealogists with Gene by Gene and Firebird Forensics Group Incorporated as well as CCPO GOLD Unit investigators were able to connect John Doe #103's DNA profile to that of Kenneth Edmond.

Investigators then obtained Edmond's DNA and sent it to BCI to be tested. The tests confirmed that the DNA in the victims' sexual assault kits matched that of Edmond. The original John Doe #103 indictment was amended to reflect his true name as the defendant. Edmond was arrested by the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department on December 6, 2023.

You can view the indictment [here](#).

## **CODIS Familial Searching**

### **John Doe #10**

On October 21, 1993, the 33-year-old female victim was walking near West 64th Street and Clark Avenue in Cleveland. A van pulled up next to the victim while she was walking. Carlis Conley, age 79 at the time of his death in August 2012, and Frankie Graham (previously John Doe #9) approached the victim along with two additional unknown males and forced her into the van. They then drove to Train Avenue, parked the vehicle, and sexually assaulted her. They tied the victim's hands and feet together and shoved her out of the vehicle. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

On June 7, 1994, the 25-year-old female victim met up with Thomas Graham (previously John Doe#11), whom she had known for two weeks. He drove her to an alley near West 48th Street and Storer Avenue where he, Carlis Conley, and two additional suspects sexually assaulted her at knifepoint. After the assaults, they forced her out of the car. She ran to a nearby house and called the police. She was transported to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

On August 30, 1998, the 27-year-old female victim was standing near West 47th Street and Lorain Avenue in Cleveland when Conley, Thomas Graham, and an additional unknown suspect told her to get into their vehicle. Once the victim was inside, they forcibly sexually assaulted her multiple times and then fled the scene. A witness heard the victim screaming and called the police. CDP responded to the scene. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

The same unique male DNA profile was developed from all three victims' sexual assault kits but did not produce any leads in CODIS. The DNA profile was then indicted as "John Doe #10" to ensure that the statute of limitations did not expire. John Doe #10 was charged with the following:

- **Three counts of Rape**
- **One count of Kidnapping**
- **One count of Robbery**



The CCPO submitted John Doe 10's DNA profile to BCI for CODIS familial searching. BCI was able to connect John Doe #10's DNA profile to that of Carlis Conley. CCPO investigators then obtained a sample of Conley's DNA and sent it to BCI to be tested. The analysis confirmed that the DNA in the victims' sexual assault kits matched Conley's DNA. The original John Doe #10 indictment was amended to reflect his true name as the defendant. Because Conley is deceased, the charges against him were dismissed as abated by death.

## John Doe #161

On April 20, 2005, the 20-year-old female victim was walking near East 97th Street and Kinsman Road in Cleveland. Noland McKinnon, age 48 at the time of his death in February 2018, approached the victim and offered her a ride. Once the victim was inside his vehicle, McKinnon drove under a bridge and sexually assaulted her. After the sexual assault, the victim went to a nearby hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

A male DNA profile was developed from the victim's sexual assault kit but did not produce any leads in CODIS. The DNA profile was then indicted as "John Doe #161" to ensure that the statute of limitations did not expire. John Doe #161 was charged with the following:

- **Three counts of Rape**
- **Two counts of Kidnapping**

The CCPO submitted John Doe 161's DNA profile to BCI for CODIS familial searching. BCI was able to connect John Doe #161's DNA profile to that of Noland McKinnon. CCPO investigators then obtained a sample of McKinnon's DNA and sent it to BCI to be tested. The analysis confirmed that the DNA in the victim's sexual assault kit matched McKinnon's DNA. The original John Doe #161 indictment was amended to reflect his true name as the defendant. Because McKinnon is deceased, the charges against him were dismissed as abated by death.

## SAKTF / G.O.L.D Unit History

Since its inception, the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (SAKTF) has completed 8,236 investigations that have resulted in the indictments of over 940 defendants, the highest number of any SAKTF in the country. The number of indictments includes crimes committed upon over 1,030 victims because several defendants are convicted or alleged serial offenders. Of those cases, the Task Force has secured around a 93% conviction rate with an average prison sentence of approximately 9 years.

In 2019 and 2020, the CCPO's Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (SAKTF) was awarded grants from the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance SAKI program. Part of that funding helped launch the office's G.O.L.D. Unit in October 2020. The G.O.L.D. Unit contracted with genealogy vendor Gene by Gene for a pilot project that included genealogical searches for 20 DNA profiles connected to cold case sexual assaults.



The G.O.L.D. Unit was formed to review unsolved cold cases, conduct follow-up investigations, and review evidence for the potential of applying advanced forensic techniques. In 2021, 2022, and 2023, the G.O.L.D. Unit was awarded additional DOJ SAKI grants, including funding for the application of forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) to unsolved sexual assaults, homicides and other violent crimes.

The unit's work includes the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force, the Lawfully Owed DNA project, the Cold Case Initiative, and FGG. To date, 34 DNA profiles in violent crime cases have been submitted to Gene By Gene for FGG, six offenders have been identified, and 10 rape cases have been solved. In addition, 17 DNA profiles have been submitted to BCI for CODIS Familial searching, two offenders have been identified, and four rape cases have been solved.

The SAKTF / G.O.L.D. Unit is led by the CCPO in partnership with the research team led by Dr. Rachel Lovell, director of Cleveland State University's Criminology Research Center, and includes the Cleveland Division of Police, the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center.