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DNA evidence identifies rape suspect as part of ongoing Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that as part of the ongoing Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project, a grand jury has indicted Donnie Michael Willis Jr., 52, for allegedly raping and sexually abusing a 31 year old female in 2007.

This is the ninth case to be indicted under the Multnomah County District Attorney's Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project.

On August 23, 2019, a Multnomah County grand jury returned the four-count indictment against Willis Jr. and an arrest warrant was issued. The indictment charges Willis Jr. with one count of rape in the first degree, one count of sodomy in the first degree and two counts of sexual abuse in the first degree.

It is alleged in the indictment that Willis Jr., while in Multnomah County on or about May 27, 2007, unlawfully and knowingly, by forcible compulsion, engaged in sexual intercourse with the victim and that he unlawfully and knowingly by means of forcible compulsion subjected her to sexual contact by touching multiple sexual intimate parts of her body. The indictment also alleges that Willis Jr. used or threatened to use a weapon during the commission of these alleged crimes.

Furthermore, the indictment alleges that on February 25, 2019, Willis Jr. was identified as the perpetrator of these alleged crimes based on DNA samples.

The victim in this case does not want media contact. The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is requesting media respect her privacy.

The Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) kit in this case was tested as part of the Multnomah County District Attorney's Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project, which was initiated by a grant provided by the New York County District Attorney's Office.

Willis Jr. is currently in the custody of the Oregon Department of Corrections. An arraignment date will be scheduled at a later time.

This case is being investigated by the Portland Police Bureau as part of its Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Workgroup. Due to the ongoing investigation, the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is not able to provide any additional details on this case.

An indictment is only an accusation of a crime. Willis Jr. is innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project

In 2015, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill, along with the Portland Police Bureau, Gresham Police Department, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police Forensic Laboratory collaboratively initiated a project to process thousands of untested Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence (SAFE) kits in Multnomah, Marion and Lane counties.

District Attorney Underhill and others quickly identified funding from the New York County District Attorney's Office (DANY) and worked collectively with the Portland Police Bureau's Sex Crimes Unit after the City of Portland received a grant from U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Grant Program.

DANY awarded the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office a total of \$1,995,453 in September 2015. Using those funds, a coordinated effort involving local law enforcement and the Oregon State Police was launched to send SAFE kits, dated 2014 or older from Multnomah, Lane and Marion counties, to a private lab in Utah for testing.

Under the DANY grant, nearly 3,000 sexual assault kits from around the state of Oregon were tested.

In 2018, Oregon became one of the first five states in the country to clear its backlog of Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) kits.

In Oregon, Senate Bill 1571, known as "Melissa's Law," was the Oregon Legislature's response to ensuring all sexual assault kits, except for anonymous kits, are sent to the Oregon State Crime Laboratory for timely testing.

The Portland Police Bureau's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Workgroup, which was created in 2015, is comprised of victim-centered and trauma informed members of the Portland Police Bureau and the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office.

Results from the kits continue to be investigated and survivors of sexual assaults are being notified. The Portland Police Bureau's Sex Crimes Unit encourages those who have had a SAFE kit collected prior to 2015 to contact the roseproject@portlandoregon.gov or 503-823-0125.

Current Multnomah County SAFE kit criminal cases (as of August 16, 2019)

State of Oregon vs Jihad Eldeen Moore - 18CR13996 – Convicted Oct. 31, 2018
State of Oregon vs Chanh Van Tran - 18CR25167 - Convicted in November 2018
State of Oregon vs Curtis Clint Williams - 17CR37474 - Convicted in June 2018
State of Oregon vs Steven Guy Tubbs - 17CR08640 - Convicted in August 2018
State of Oregon vs Jose Oscar Rosales - 17CR29317 - Convicted in February 2018
State of Oregon vs Ricky Alexander Harrison - 18CR59141 - Pending arraignment
State of Oregon vs Richard Timothy Ward – 19CR25495 - Pending arraignment
State of Oregon vs Jesse Ryan Moser – 19CR53575 – Pending trial
State of Oregon vs Donnie Michael Willis Jr. – 19CR55777 – Pending arraignment

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