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Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project results in 10th Multnomah County indictment

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 Leslie L. Thornton, 38, for allegedly raping and sexually abusing a 43 year old female in 2011.

This is the 10th case to be indicted under the Multnomah County District Attorney's Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Elimination Project.

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

On September 10, 2019, a Multnomah County grand jury returned a six-count indictment against Thornton and an arrest warrant was issued. The indictment charges Thornton with two counts of rape in the first degree, two counts of sodomy in the first degree and two counts of sexual abuse in the first degree.

It is alleged in the indictment that Thornton, while in Multnomah County on or about November 4, 2011, unlawfully and knowingly engaged in sexual intercourse with a female who was incapable of providing consent and that he unlawfully and knowingly subjected that female to sexual contact by touching a sexual intimate part of her body.

According to publicly available documents, this investigation started on November 5, 2011 when Portland Police responded to the intersection of Southwest 10th Avenue and Southwest Market Street to investigate a reported sex crime involving a person, later identified as Thornton. At the time of his initial arrest in 2011, Thornton was listed in a police report as being unsheltered. The case was assigned to the Portland Police Bureau's Sex Crimes Unit. A charging document was filed by the district attorney's office on November 7, 2011.

On November 15, 2011, the stated informed the court that it was unable to proceed on the case at that time. As a result, the court dismissed the previously filed charging document against Thornton. The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office is unable to comment on facts surrounding the initial dismissal.

Recently, Thornton was transported from Marion County, Oregon and booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center. He was arraigned on September 25, 2019 at the Multnomah County Justice Center, Courtroom #3.

This case is being investigated by the Portland Police Bureau as part of its Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Workgroup

Like in all criminal and civil matters, electronic copies of court documents, which are not subject to a protective order, are available to the public through the Oregon eCourt Information (OECI) system.

No additional information can be released by the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office at this time pursuant to the Oregon State Professional Rules of Conduct.

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

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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 trial
- State of Oregon vs Leslie L. Thornton – 111134868 – Pending arraignment

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