Genealogy Research: Successful Conviction of a Serial Rapist

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Timeline of Events

- August 2007 - Attempted First Degree Sex Assault
- June 2010 - First Degree Rape
- August 2010 - First Degree Rape
- January 2011 - First Degree Rape
- August 2011 - First Degree Sex Assault
- September 2012 - First Degree Assault/Attempted Sex Assault
- Parabon NanoLabs Phenotyping - 2017
- Genealogy/Family History Research - 2018
- Arrest and Court Conclusion - 2018-2019

Attempted First Degree Sex Assault 2007

In August 2007 an unknown black male would start a series of attacks that would heighten in 2010 through 2012 in the Germantown and Gaithersburg areas of Montgomery County Maryland .

Attempted First Degree Sex Assault 2007

This first attack would start when the victim was awakened by an unknown black male in her bedroom. He had his pants down and penis exposed. He threatened the victim that he had a gun and would shoot her. Then he demanded the victim perform fellatio on him.

2007 suspect composite create from information from the victim.

Attempted First Degree Sex Assault 2007

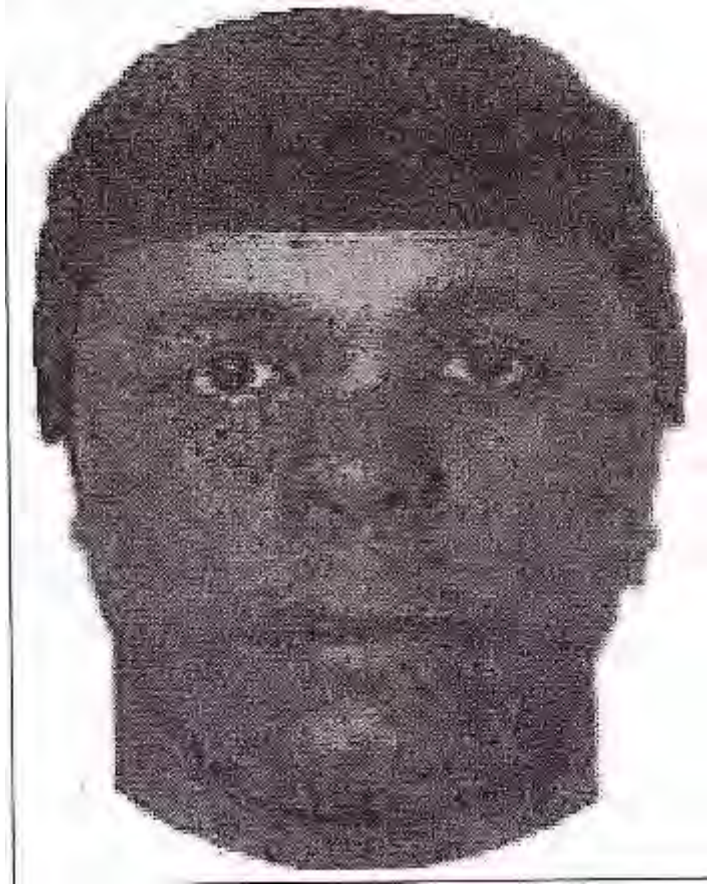
The victim would struggle and fight the assailant off. The suspect would flee the scene and drop a t-shirt behind. Despite the work of detectives and support units this case would grow cold because of the lack of new leads.

First Degree Rape June 2010

On June 19th, 2010 around 0300 hours in the morning an unknown black male would enter an apartment in the Germantown area of Montgomery County, Maryland through an unlocked front door and encounter a 68 year old woman in her bed.

First Degree Rape June 2010

The suspect would hold an unknown weapon to the victim's head and forcibly rape her. The suspect would get away undetected. DNA evidence would be recovered from a SANE kit (Sexual Assault Nurse Examination) performed with the victim. There was no match in CODIS.

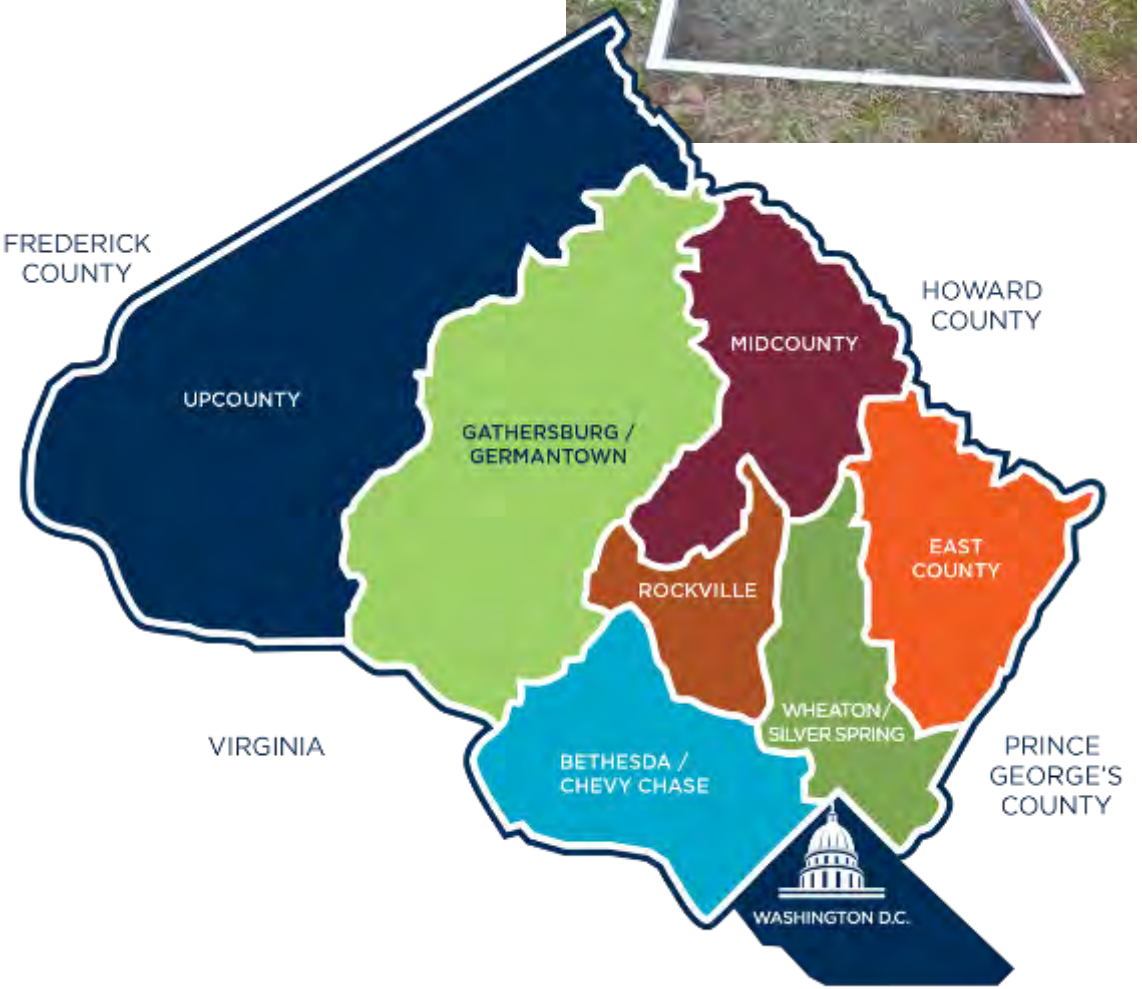


June 2010 composite with a black dew rag.

First Degree Rape August 2010

In August of 2010, an unknown suspect crawled through a first floor window in the early hours of the morning at a senior living center in Germantown, Maryland.

Window screen



First Degree Rape August 2010

The suspect was armed with a pair of scissors. The suspect then raped an 86 year old woman resident of the center, hitting her several times during the incident. The suspect would once again flee the scene undetected. DNA evidence would be recovered from a SANE kit performed with the victim.

First Degree Rape August 2010

The DNA was placed into CODIS and hit on a case to case match with the First Degree Rape from June 2010.

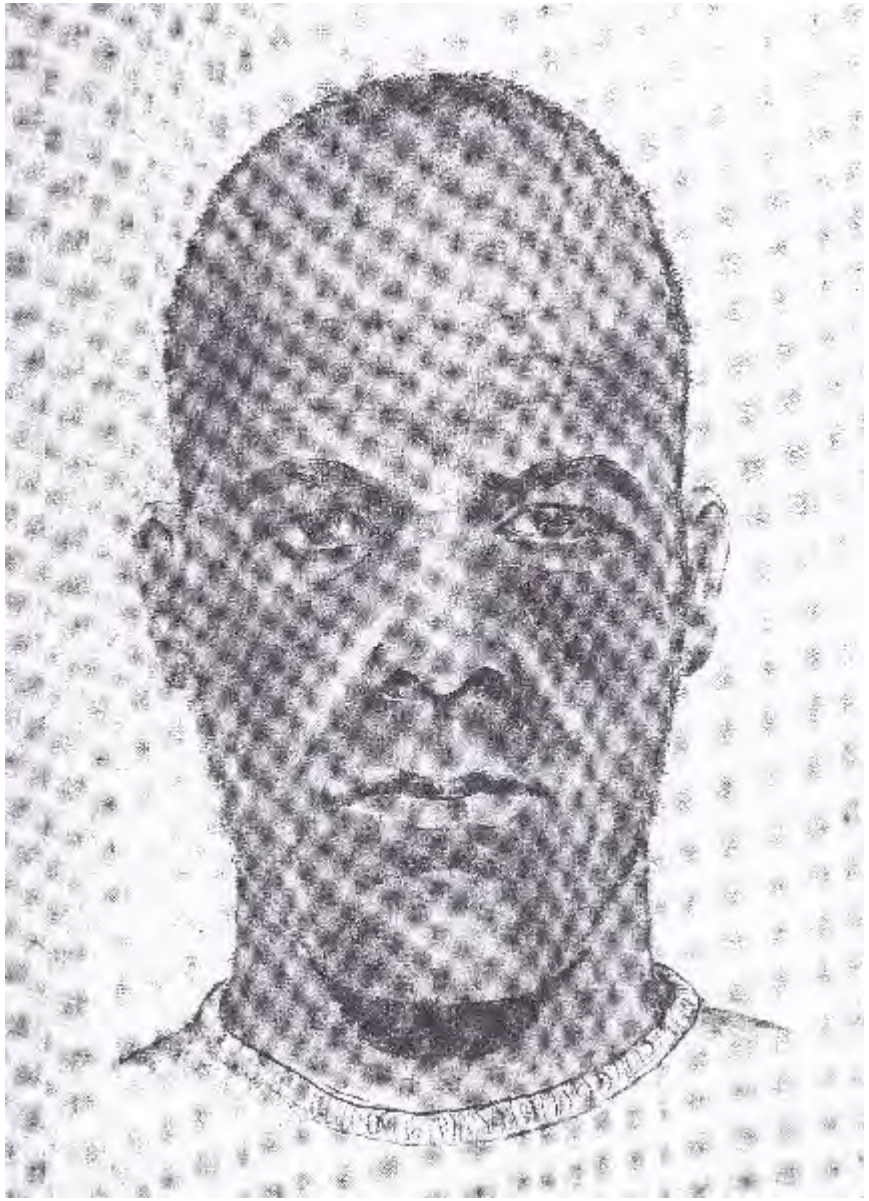
The below quoted text is from the victim of the August 2010 First Degree Rape taken from a September 14, 2018 **Washington Post** news article by **Dan Morse**.

*In clear script, the 87-year-old woman wrote a poem about being raped. She titled it "**Hell**."*

"I did not think I believed in you, the opposite of heaven, love, compassion, caring. But now I do," she wrote. "I have experienced Hell in the form of a man, an intruder . . . a dehumanized being."

First Degree Rape January 2011

In January of 2011 the same suspect would return to the victim's residence of the June 2010 Rape. He would enter through a window and proceed to the victim's bedroom where he raped her a second time.



2011 Composite

“You Again!!”

The Victim would tell the suspect in the January 2011 Rape.

First Degree Rape January 2011

The suspect would disappear into the darkness. DNA evidence was recovered from the crime scene and placed into CODIS resulting in another case to case hit with the Rape from June and August 2010.

The below quoted text is from the victim of the June 2010 & January 2011 First Degree Rapes taken from a February 11, 2011 **Germantown MD. Patch** news article by **Frances Correa**.

"I am determined to do everything I can to see to it this arrogant little twerp doesn't get away with it, frankly," said the 69-year old victim when asked why she wanted to share her story with the public. *"I made a conscious decision that I wasn't going to be the one that cries and screams and has hysterics over it. I need to survive and there are other things you can do."* The 69-year old has been a Germantown resident for 25 years and said despite her experience she's not going anywhere. *"As long as I can stay where I am and cope, that's where I want to go."*

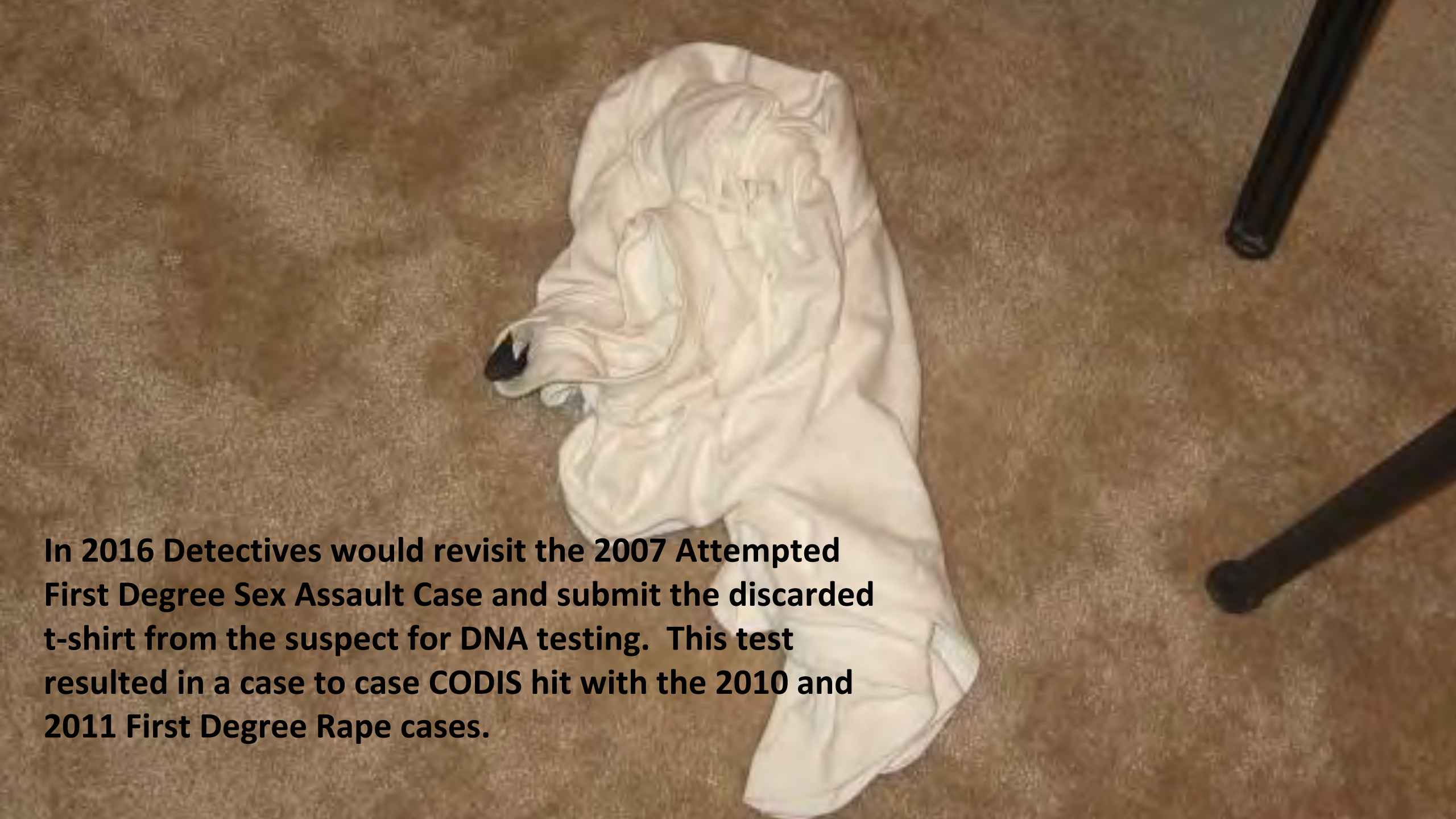
First degree Sex Assault August 2011

On August 28th, 2011 at approximately 0045 hours in the morning an unknown black male in his 20's 5'7" to 5'9" 160-170 lbs. thin build would enter a Gaithersburg apartment through a rear window. This suspect would encounter a 37 year old woman, imply he had a gun and force her to perform fellatio on him. The victim would fight off the suspect and the suspect would flee the scene. No chargeable/useable DNA evidence was obtained in this case to this date.

First Degree Assault/Attempted Sex Assault September 2012

On September 2nd, 2012 at approximately 0410 hours in the morning an unknown black male 5’8” to 5’10” 160-170 lbs. and thin build would enter a Germantown townhouse through the rear slider. The suspect would encounter a 54 year old woman in her home. The victim would see the suspect and grab a knife as the suspect approached her. A struggle ensued and the victim sustained a severe cut to her hand. The suspect would tell the victim “Don’t struggle Ma’am.” The suspect fled the scene. No DNA evidence was found in this case.

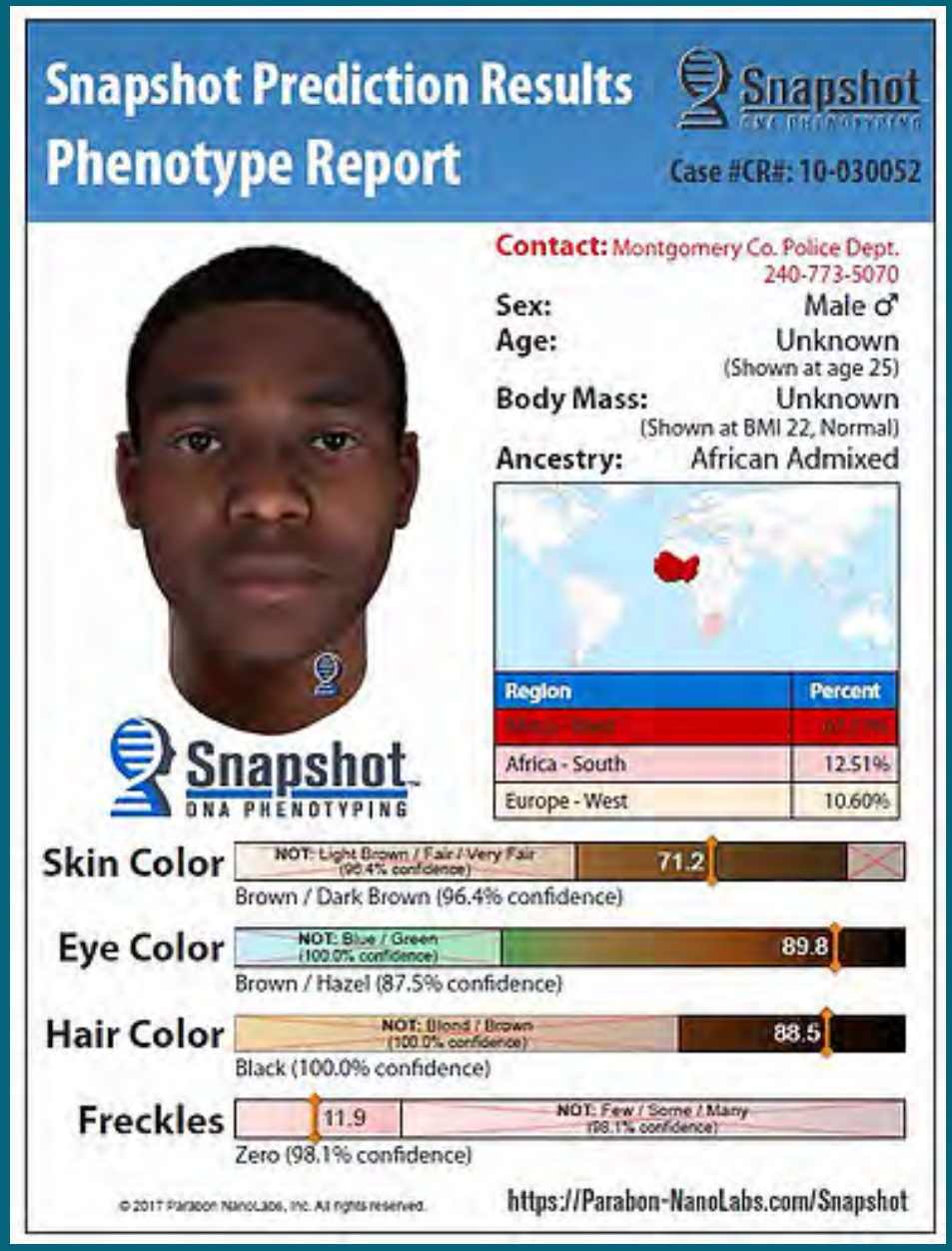
After tireless efforts by investigators, special assignment teams, patrol units, command staff, and community members these cases would sadly grow cold.



In 2016 Detectives would revisit the 2007 Attempted First Degree Sex Assault Case and submit the discarded t-shirt from the suspect for DNA testing. This test resulted in a case to case CODIS hit with the 2010 and 2011 First Degree Rape cases.

Parabon Snapshot Released

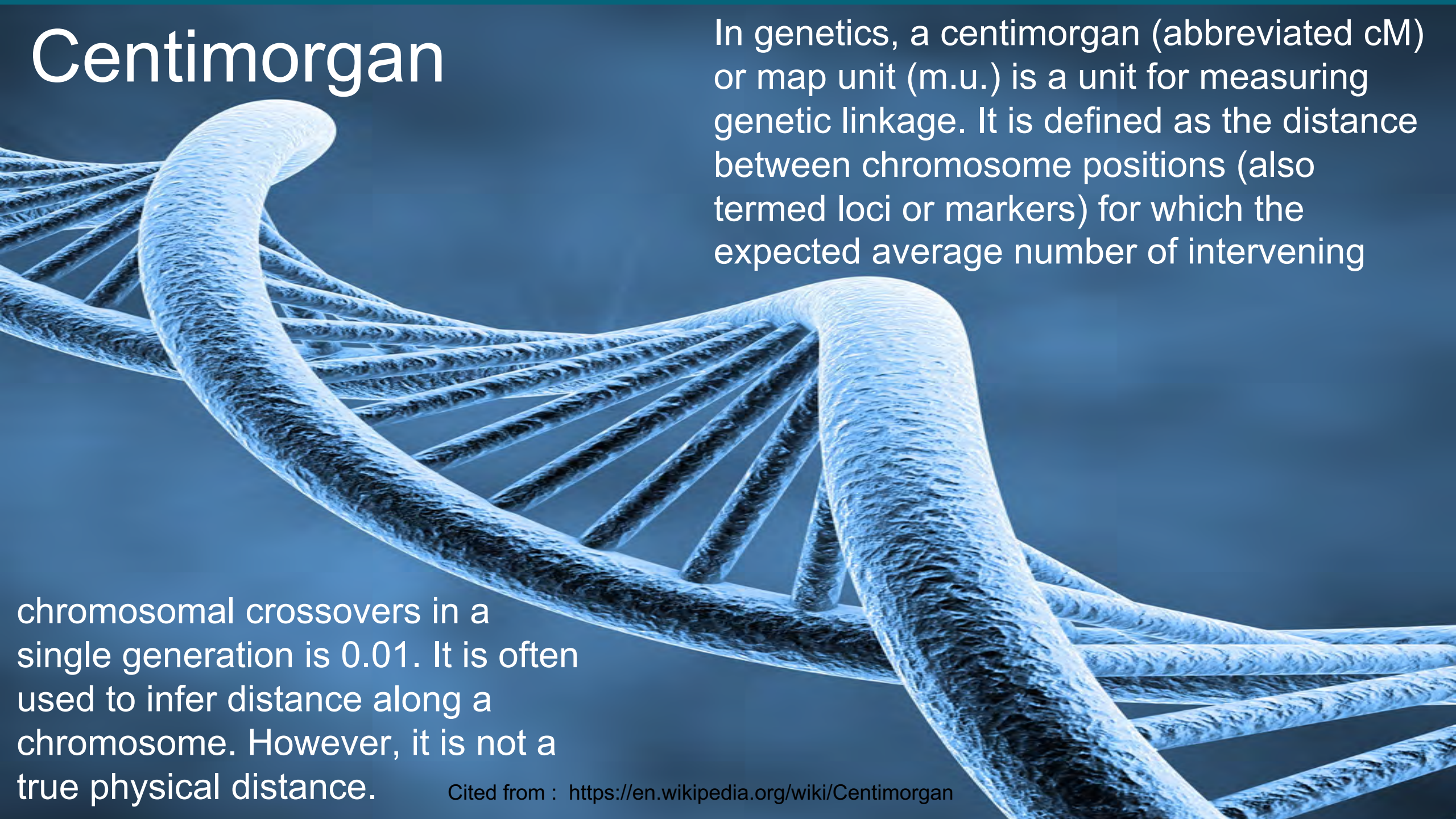
Detectives in the Montgomery County Police Cold Case and Missing Persons Unit would seek out the services of Parabon NanoLabs, a DNA technology company in Virginia that specializes in DNA phenotyping and in June of 2017 this composite was released to the public.



DNA Phenotyping is the prediction of physical appearance from DNA. It can be used to generate leads in cases where there are no suspects or database hits, to narrow suspect lists, and to help solve human remains cases.

In September of 2018 the Montgomery County Police Cold Case & Missing Person Unit would receive the results of a 10 hour genealogy block based on our suspect's DNA from Parabon NanoLabs. This information was used by Detectives to build a family tree from a person who shared a certain amount of DNA (referred to as centimorgans or cM) with the suspect, to a potential suspect.

Centimorgan

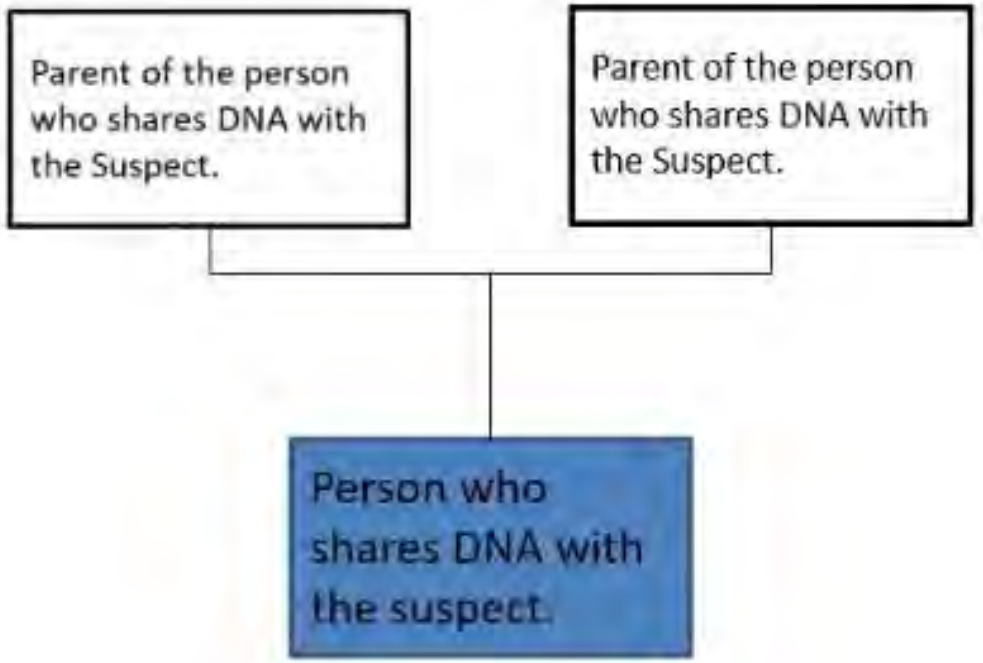


In genetics, a centimorgan (abbreviated cM) or map unit (m.u.) is a unit for measuring genetic linkage. It is defined as the distance between chromosome positions (also termed loci or markers) for which the expected average number of intervening chromosomal crossovers in a single generation is 0.01. It is often used to infer distance along a chromosome. However, it is not a true physical distance.

Cited from : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centimorgan

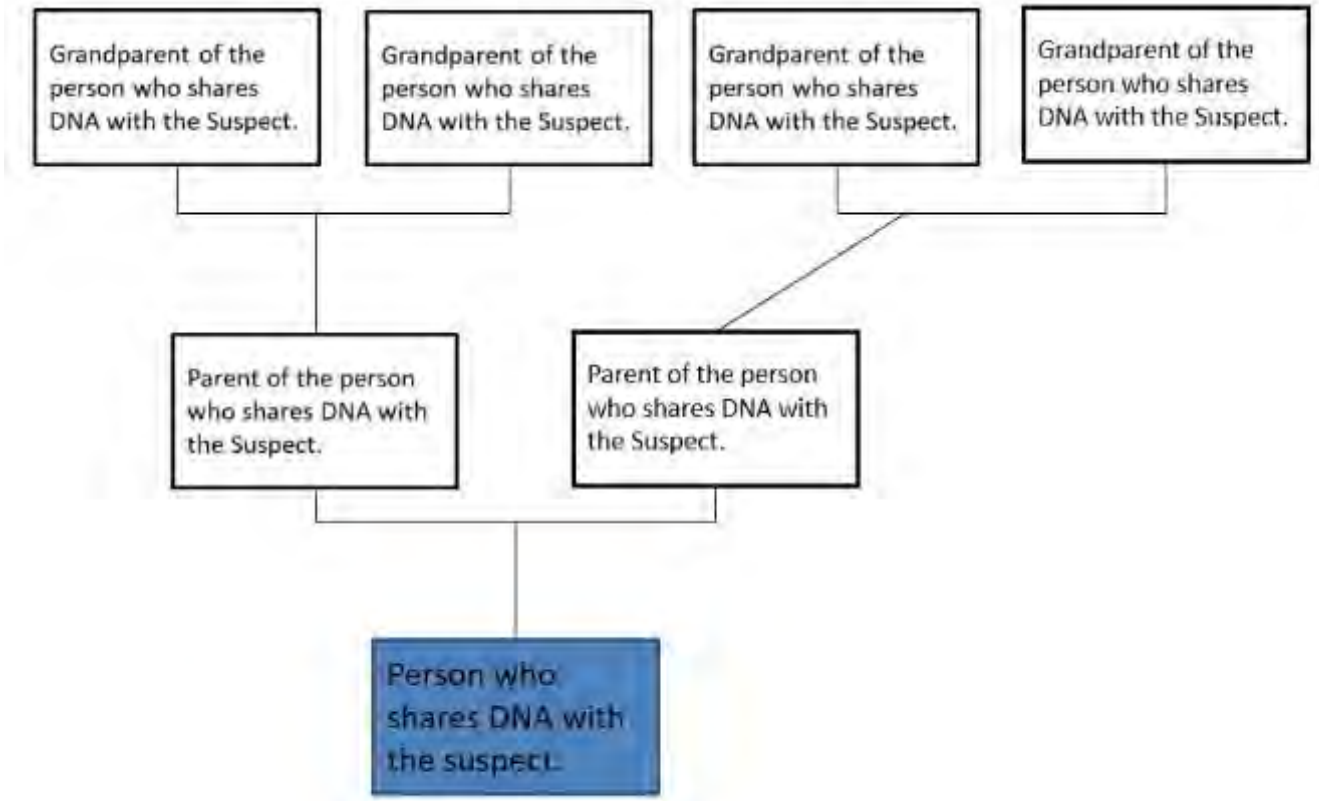
Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

First we started with a name of a person that Parabon NanoLabs identified as someone who shares DNA with the suspect. In this case this person shared enough DNA to be a second cousin once removed or a first cousin twice removed or equivalent. We began with identifying this persons parents through obituaries and public record searches.



Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Next we identified the Grandparents of the person who shared DNA with our suspect. This work was done with obituaries, US Census records, and public record searches. From this family position we began to trace both sets of grandparents forward to their children and backwards to their parents.



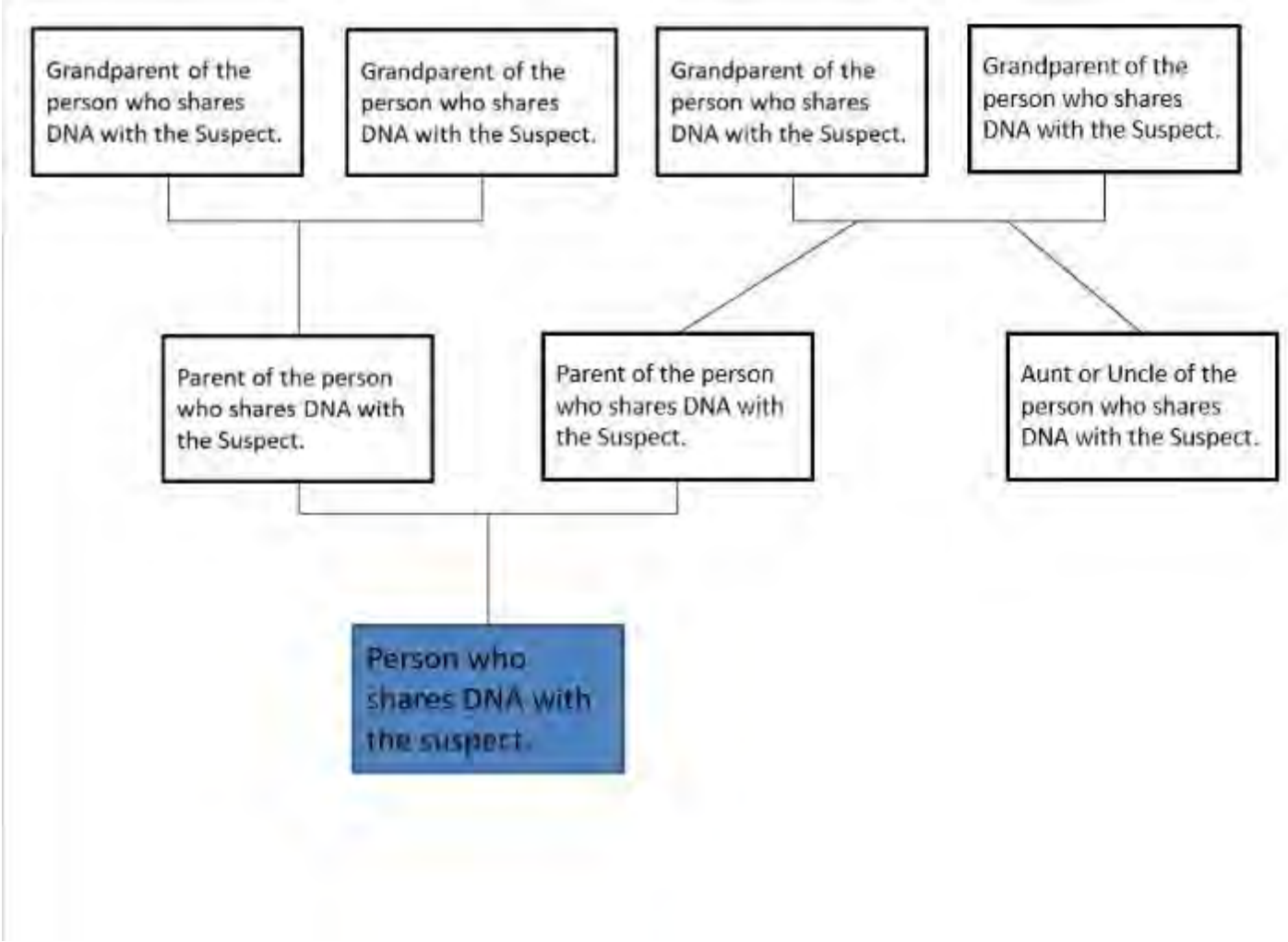
Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

The great grandparents of the person who shared DNA with the suspect had to be searched and traced due to the position in the family where the suspect could have fallen. This position would have yielded a second cousin once removed position which is an equivalent to a first cousin twice removed.

We did also begin searches of the DNA shared person's Great Great Grandparents to trace to a position (siblings of the DNA shared person's great aunts and great uncles) which would also be equivalent to a first cousin twice removed but most of the people in this position were too old or deceased.

Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Next we identified the Aunts and Uncles of the person who shared DNA with our suspect. This work was done with obituaries, US Census records, and public record searches. At this family position there were multiple families identified. In the family that ultimately lead to the suspect there were 5 families identified that had to be worked at this position.



Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

U.S. Census Records

Census records can provide the building blocks of your research. The first Federal Population Census was taken in 1790, and has been taken every ten years since. Because of a 72-year restriction on access to the Census, the most recent year available is 1940. The 1950 Census will be released in 2022.

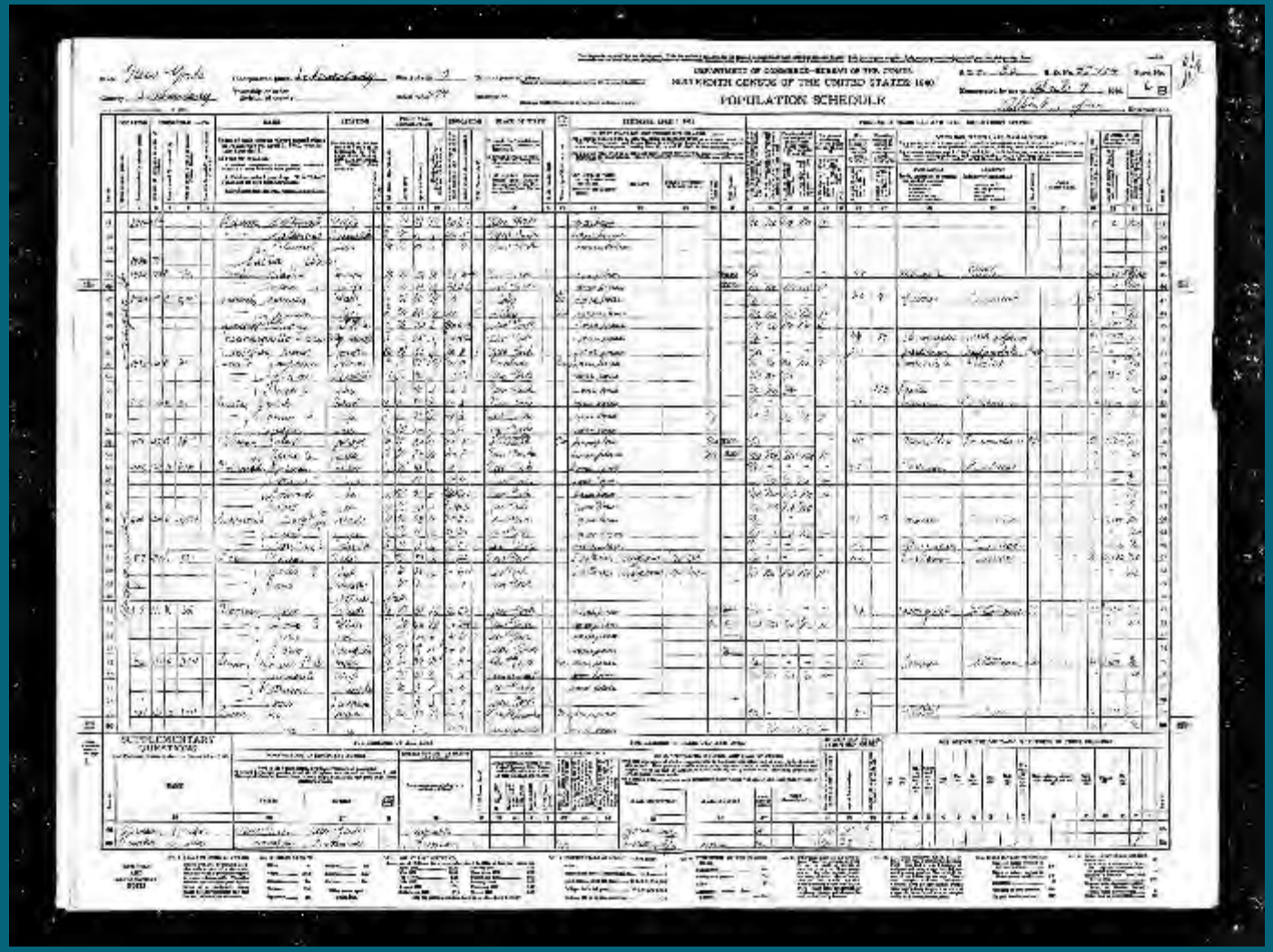
The National Archives has the census schedules on microfilm available from 1790 to 1940, and most have now been digitized by our digitization partners. Family researchers generally find it most helpful to begin with the most current census and work backwards as a strategy for locating people in earlier generations.

Cited front the National Archives Website: https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/census

Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

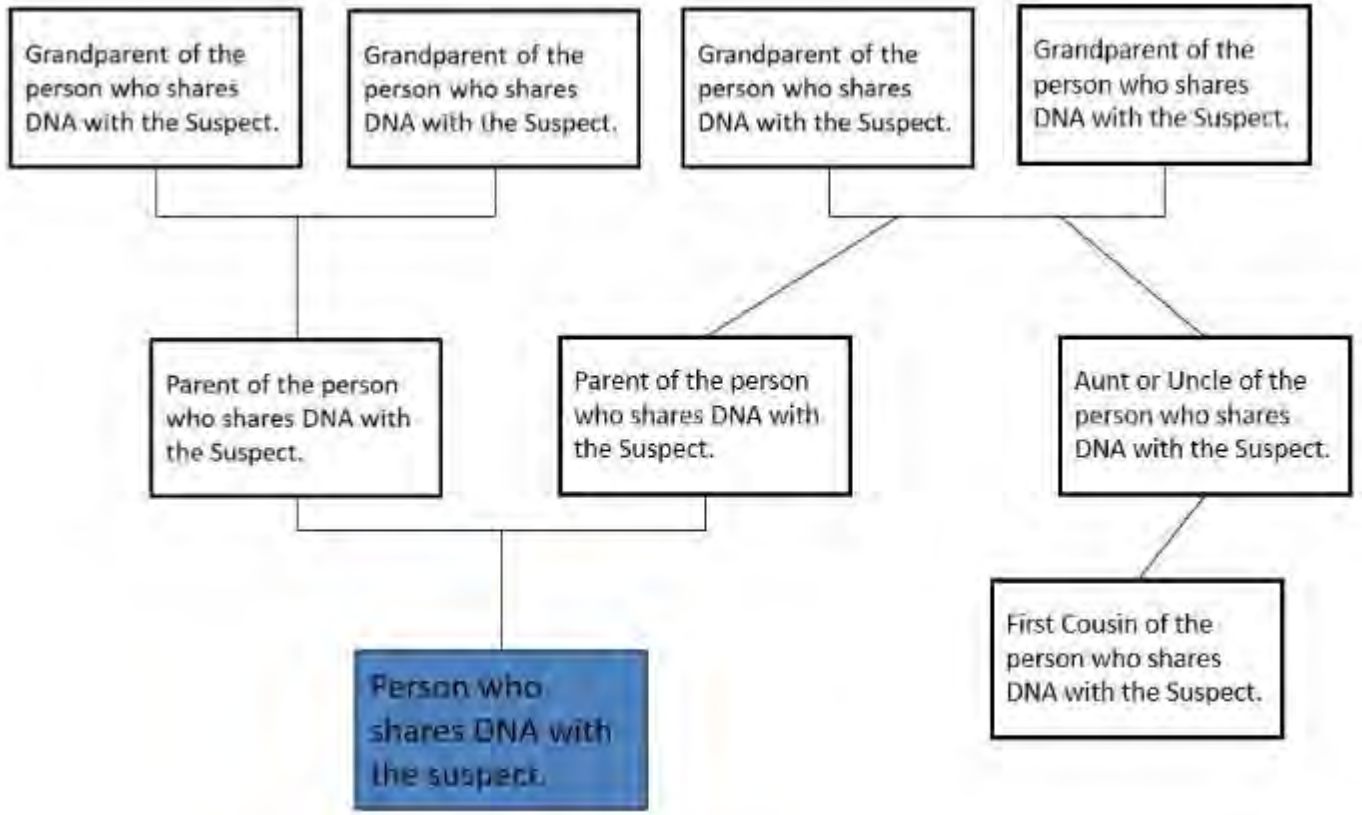
U.S. Census Records

Census records could be useful to find data on geographical locations, ages, in some cases dates of birth, siblings, parents, grandparents, in-laws, neighbors, occupations, place of birth, and parent's place of birth.



Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Next, we identified the First Cousins of the person who shared DNA with our suspect. This work was done with obituaries, and public record searches. At this family position there were multiple families identified. In the family that ultimately lead to the suspect there were 7 families identified that had to be worked at this position.



Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Obituary Searches

Obituaries and death notices are hidden treasures in genealogy/family history research. Obituaries can be found in a number of locations: archived newspapers, online funeral announcements, funeral home websites, grave locator websites, and library microfilm are just a few.

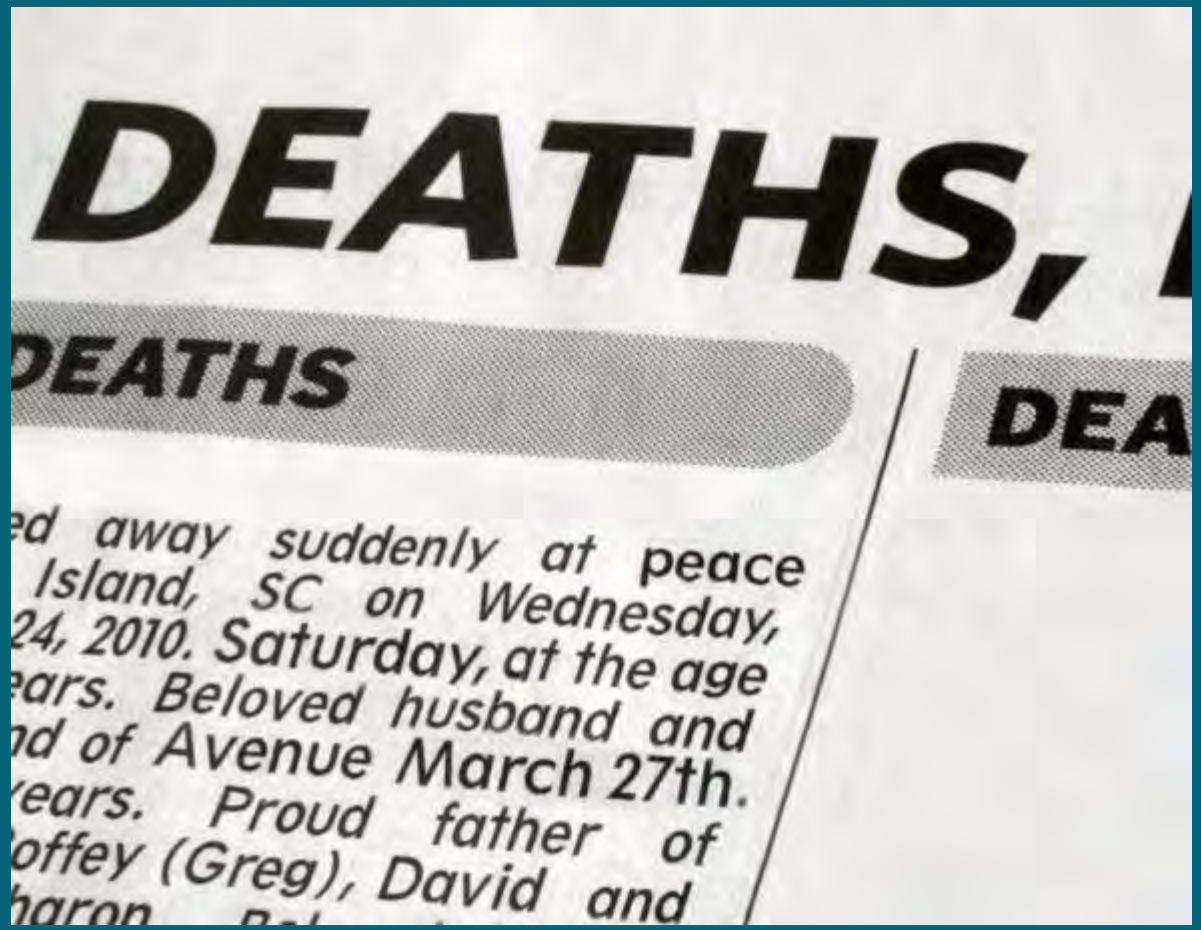
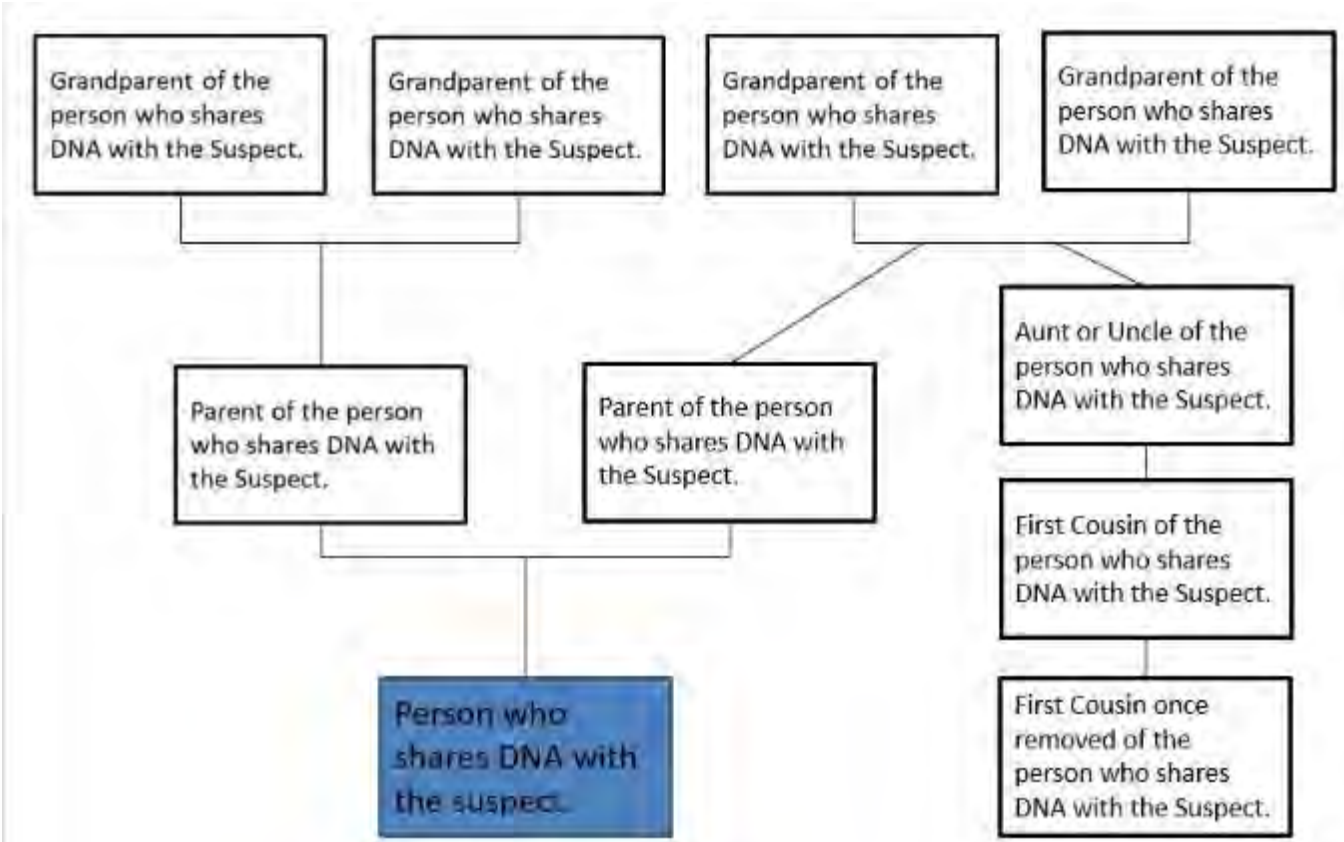


Photo taken from: https://www.everplans.com/articles/death-notice-templates-and-obituary-templates

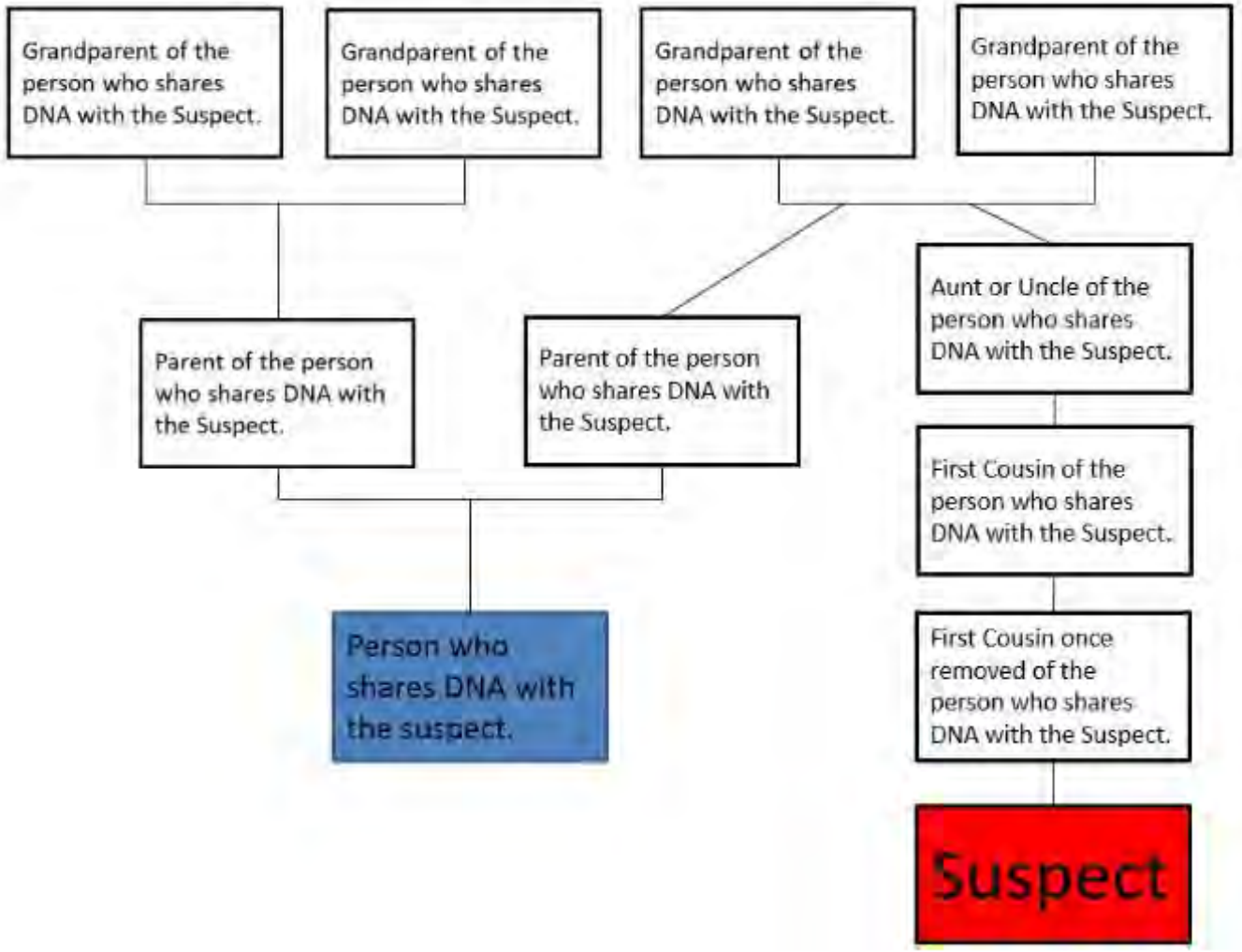
Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Next, we identified the First Cousins once removed of the person who shared DNA with our suspect. This work was done with obituaries, and public record searches. At this family position there were multiple families identified. In the family that ultimately lead to the suspect there were 5 families identified that had to be worked at this position.



Tracing from a DNA shared family member to the suspect.

Next, we identified the First Cousins twice removed of the person who shared DNA with our suspect. This work was done with obituaries, and public record searches. At this family position we were able to zero in on the suspect.



Genealogy/Family History Research Methods and Ideas.

- The use of genealogy focused websites such as Family Search, Ancestry, Geni, and My Heritage.
- The use of newspaper archives and internet obituary websites.
- The National Archives and Library of Congress.
- Local libraries, county court houses, local cemeteries, and churches.
- Social media searches and Google searches.

Genealogy/Family History Research Methods and Ideas.

- Researching historical data from certain regions where your target family comes from can be useful in verifying records and getting you to the next piece. For example: If you have information that a certain family was from a small town in Poland you could isolate your searches to this location until you find enough information to widen the search and prove or disprove your data.

- Often names on documents are misspelled or have bad handwriting that is not recognized by search engines. So you may have to be creative on your search terms & name spellings and take the time to leaf through hundreds or thousands of pages of documents to find names that look similar or have similar pronunciations.

Genealogy/Family History Research Methods and Ideas.

- Knowing how and where to find certain documents is half the battle. Knowing what is publicly available and what you can pay for is helpful. Some documents are not allowed to be released by certain government agencies because of privacy issues. In these cases you have to ask yourself what information are you looking for, and could it be found on another easily accessed document through public record or social media.

Bottom Line – Genealogy is like building a puzzle, you search for the right piece to fit (some easier than others) and the pieces that don't fit you put on the side until you find the other pieces that connect them. Creativity and persistence are the best skills a genealogist can have.

The DNA match and Arrest of the suspect.

Using Law Enforcement databases, information from the case files & and the criminal history of the identified suspect detective established enough information to receive a search warrant for the suspect's DNA. The search warrant was served, the suspect was put under surveillance, and the DNA sample was sent to the Montgomery County Police Crime Laboratory for comparison.

The DNA match and Arrest of the suspect.

The Montgomery County Police Crime Laboratory tested the DNA sample obtained from the search warrant and received a hit (direct match) to the DNA evidence the suspect left behind in his crimes. This hit was obtained by the Crime Laboratory in record breaking time, just under 6 hours. I don't think CSI could have done it any better. Detectives obtained an arrest warrant for the suspect and he was apprehended at a grocery store in Germantown, Maryland by plain clothes units without incident.

Marlon Michael Alexander

Arrested & charged in September of 2018 with four of the cases in this presentation.

Plead Guilty in February of 2019.

Snapshot
DNA PHENOTYPING

The two cases of sex assault from August 2011 & September 2012 will be closed out exceptionally from the identification of Marlon Michael Alexander due to the lack of physical evidence. After the news story broke with the mugshot and identification of Alexander, contact would be made with victim of the September 2012 assault. She said when she saw Alexander's picture that she was certain it was Alexander that assaulted her.

Suspicious Incidents Upcounty May Be Linked to Germantown Rapes
Germantown Patch 09/28/2012
Police Release Composite Of Germantown Rapist From DNA Evidence
Germantown Patch 06/23/2017
Behind the hunt for a rapist who targeted older women: DNA, genealogy and a cop named Smugs
Washington Post 09/14/2018
UPCOUNTY
GATHERSBURG / GERMANTOWN
MIDCOUNTY
ROCKVILLE
WHEATON / SILVER SPRIN
WASHING
Montgomery County Department of Police
INFORMATION WANTED
Crime
Suspect
Elderly Rape Victims Speak Out
Germantown Patch 02/11/2011
Snapshot
DNA PHENOTYPING
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
POLICE OFFICER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD
Accused Serial Rapist, Marlon Alexander, Held Without Bond
Germantown Pulse
September 17, 2018 | By Kevin O'Rourke
Boyds
Germantown
Montgomery Village
Redland
Darnestown
North Potomac
Rockville
270
124
112

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