

DNA WITNESS

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Five murdered and sexually assaulted women around the Baton Rouge area were found to have a common suspect through STR DNA analysis. The genetic profile of the killer from the crime scene specimens could not be found in a database. With no suspects, the Louisiana Task Force set out to dragnet suspects from the local community. Eyewitness accounts of a Caucasian males acting suspicious near the crime scenes focused the efforts of the task force in what would later prove to be the wrong direction. In February 2003, the Louisiana State Police Crime Lab contracted the services for DNA WITNESS testing after the dragnet DNA testing produced no “hits” from the more than 700 individuals tested. Our Results indicated the killer to be 85% Sub-Saharan African and 15% Native American and two months after receiving this information, the task force had an African American male in custody that matched the STR profile found at each crime scene. This SNP based DNA test for the determination of an individual’s Biogeographical Ancestry (BGA) has been utilized for genealogy enthusiasts, adopted individuals, and persons wanting to prove Native American affiliation. This presentation will provide information on the scientific foundation of the test and how it can and should be applied in modern forensics.