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G.O.L.D. Unit Defendant Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison for Sexually Assaulting Two Victims in 1994 and 1998

CLEVELAND - Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that the defendant Leo Bradley Scott III, 61, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for sexually assaulting two women in 1994 and 1998. The arrest was the result of the efforts of the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Office's G.O.L.D. Unit (Genetic Operations Linking DNA).

"This individual was able to evade justice due to his prior rape conviction occurring before CODIS existed," said Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley. "He assaulted two additional women over 20 years ago, and now through the great work of our G.O.L.D. Unit and our law enforcement partners, he will deservedly serve time behind bars."

In 2019 and 2020, the CCPO's Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (SAKTF)* was awarded grants from the U.S. Department of Justice's Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI). 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.

John Doe #64

On October 14, 1994, the female victim, 22, was walking eastbound on Euclid Avenue in Cleveland when she was approached by Leo Bradley Scott III. He grabbed her from behind and dragged her near East 118th Street, strangled her, threatened to kill her, and then sexually assaulted her. Afterward, Scott fled the scene. The victim called the police and was transported to the hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

On April 18, 1998, a second unrelated female victim, 26, was at a club in Cleveland with friends and family. The victim left the club and was walking home when Leo Bradley Scott III drove up, got the victim inside his vehicle, and then drove to another location. The victim attempted to exit his vehicle and Scott drove to a parking lot on Shaw Avenue, and then sexually assaulted her. Afterward, Scott dropped the victim off near a fire station. The victim called police and was transported to the hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

It should be noted that in 1983, this defendant was convicted of rape in Cuyahoga County, which occurred prior to the use of the felony DNA database. As a result, his DNA was not in the database.

In 2013, the CCPO assembled the SAKTF to address investigative leads that resulted from the testing of



previously unsubmitted sexual assault kits primarily between 1993 to 2011. The victims' sexual assault kits were tested by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) as part of the initiative. However, Scott's DNA did not produce any matches in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) – the FBI's national DNA database. Scott's DNA profile – unknown at the time – was then indicted as "John Doe #64" as a means to ensure that the statute of limitations did not run out.

The DNA profile for "John Doe #64" was submitted as part of the project. DNA analysts and investigative genetic genealogists were able to connect "John Doe #64's" DNA profile to that of Leo Bradley Scott III.

Investigators then surreptitiously obtained Scott'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 Scott. The original "John Doe #64" indictment was amended to reflect his name as the defendant and an arrest warrant was issued. On July 20, 2021, the U.S. Marshals arrested him without incident.

On January 30, 2023, Leo Bradley Scott III pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- **One count of Rape**
- **One count of Sexual Battery**

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

Since its inception, the Task Force has completed 7,900 investigations that have resulted in over 850 defendants indicted, the highest number of any SAKTF in the country. The number of indictments includes over 1,000 victims as several defendants are convicted or alleged serial offenders. Of those cases, the Task Force has secured over a 93% conviction rate with offenders' average prison sentence being approximately 10 years.

As the original 7,026 investigations neared completion, the CCPO contacted the Cleveland Division of Police (CPD) Sex Crimes Unit who indicated there was a need for further investigation on sexual assault kits that have been tested by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO) between 2012 and 2019. The G.O.L.D. Unit was formed to conduct follow-up investigations and review unknown DNA profiles to determine if they may be eligible for additional testing with new technology. In 2021 and 2022, the G.O.L.D. Unit was awarded additional DOJ SAKI grants to continue genealogical testing of sexual assault cold cases and additional profiles were submitted.

The unit's work includes the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force, the Cold Case Homicide project, Genealogy Testing of unsolved cold cases and the Lawfully Owed DNA project. To date, 29 DNA profiles of indicted rapists have been submitted and five cases have been solved using genealogy.