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Alleged rapist traced through son's DNA

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A MAN accused of raping a 17-year-old girl in an Ipswich park nearly 20 years ago was traced as a result of his son's DNA being on a national database, a court has heard.

Forensic scientist Judith Cunnison told a jury at Ipswich Crown Court that family members share a number of DNA characteristics and 50-year-old Phil Collins was arrested because of his son's profile being kept on record.

She explained to the jury that everyone inherits DNA from their parents, with half coming from a person's father and half from his or her mother.

She said that DNA analysis techniques had become more sophisticated and sensitive since the commission of the alleged rape in 1990 and modern techniques enabled scientists to discriminate between individuals more clearly.

She said that in 1990 scientists required a crime sample, such as a stain, the size of a 50p to obtain a DNA profile but nowadays a profile could be obtained from a spot the size of a pinprick thanks to a photocopying process.

Mrs Cunnison said that although clothing worn by the alleged rape victim had been destroyed since the initial investigation in 1990, laboratory slides taken at the time had been kept in secure storage and had been reviewed.

Collins, of Dickens Road, Ipswich, has denied raping a 17-year-old woman in January 1990. He has also denied two offences each of indecent assault and buggery on the teenager during the alleged attack.

The victim, who is now 37, has claimed that she was raped after being grabbed by a masked man wielding a knife as she walked through Gippeswyk Park at night.

The court has heard that Collins was one of a number of people questioned by police at the time of the alleged rape and had denied any knowledge of it and claimed to have an alibi.

As a result of advances in DNA testing police officers carried out a "cold case" review of the alleged attack and arrested Collins last year after his DNA was found on the woman's underwear.

The trial continues today.(tues). []

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gary marsh