



17th September 2009

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BABY LILY

The body of Baby Lily was found in the River Alne in March 2006 by a young boy walking his dog in parkland in Warwickshire. After appeals to the public failed to bring the mother forward, the help of the Forensic Science Service was enlisted by Warwickshire Police.

Scientists extracted DNA from Baby Lily's decomposed body as well as from the bloodstained garments she had been discovered with. By comparing the two profiles they were able to ascertain that the bloodstains must have come from Lily's mother. This profile was searched on the database, but no match was found. At this point the FSS were able to suggest that the familial searching technique they had pioneered could help to move the investigation forward.

As a person's DNA is inherited 50 per cent from their mother and 50 per cent from their father, scientists in this case were able to deduce half of Baby Lily's father's profile from the material they had. This was then searched against the National DNA Database. Although it was only 50 per cent of a profile and thus brought up many partial matches, these could be prioritised using police intelligence.

Each of the men on the list they drew up were visited and asked to give a list of their sexual partners at around the time of Lily's conception. These were followed up and each of the women named was asked to give a voluntary DNA sample. One of these women, Rachel Davies, provided a full DNA match to the bloodstained clothes found with Baby Lily and she pleaded guilty to concealment of a body. In August 2007 she was given a two year probation order.

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