



MANCHESTER

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Manchester rapist jailed after DNA breakthrough

A rapist who was captured by police after his son's DNA sample led officers to him almost 24 years after he attacked a woman has been jailed.

Barry Howell, 56, of Denshaw Close, Burnage, raped the woman at knifepoint on wasteland in Manchester city centre in November 1989.

He was arrested in February after police found a similar DNA profile, belonging to his son, on a database.

Howell was sentenced to nine years in prison at Manchester Crown Court.

Greater Manchester Police said the woman, who was 25 at the time, was returning to her car from work when she was grabbed and attacked.

An investigation immediately started and forensic samples were taken, but police were unable to make an arrest.

In 2004, the case was reviewed as part of a national operation to solve rape cases using "the latest DNA profiling techniques".

A full DNA profile was then created for Howell from original samples provided, but no matches were found on the national database.

A "familial match" was found last year after a database of convicted offenders was checked again.

'Sense of closure'

Police said a new DNA sample was then requested from Howell, which was a "direct match to the full DNA profile obtained eight years earlier".

Investigations found Howell was living and working in Manchester at the time of the attack. He was then arrested and charged.

In a statement, the victim said: "What happened that evening has had an enormous and negative impact on not just my life but the lives of others, over the past 24 years.

"But I do not want to look back now, or pass any comment on Howell whatsoever.

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"I want to move forward with my life and this process has brought me some sense of closure."

Det Con Michaela Clinch said Howell had "hid for nearly a quarter of a century".

"When advances in DNA profiling led us to his door, he showed no remorse nor admitted his guilt, subjecting this woman to the further ordeal of giving evidence during a trial," she said.

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