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Ipswich: Sex assault victim helped snare attacker scratching his face to collect DNA

✉ HOLLIE-RAE MERRICK and LIZZIE PARRY [<mailto:hollie-rae.merrick@archant.co.uk> lizzie.parry@archant.co.uk]

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A MAN who broke into a woman's Ipswich home subjecting her to a sickening sex attack was traced after his victim scratched frantically at his face and arms, having had the presence of mind to collect his DNA.

Hilland Matthews admitted sexually assaulting the woman in her Ipswich home, when he appeared at Ipswich Crown Court on Friday.

The 66-year-old of Swallow Road, Ipswich pleaded guilty to three offences – sexual assault, sexual assault by penetration and one of trespass with intent to commit a sexual offence.

After entering his victim's house through an unlocked back door at about 9.30pm on June 5 2011, Matthews, who smelt of alcohol and tobacco, attacked the woman.

At his first appearance at South East Suffolk Magistrates' Court, the court heard details of the prosecution's case.

The prosecutor said: "She closed her eyes at that point and when she opened her eyes again he had disappeared."

During the horrific attack, the woman who cannot be named for legal reasons, tried to fight Matthews off, scratching at his face and arms.

Detectives investigating the attack took her to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre where samples of Matthew's blood, which she managed to obtain during the struggle, were taken.

Analysing the DNA, police were able to establish the attacker had familial connections in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire.

It was then that detectives discovered a link with a family member and Matthews, who is understood to have moved to Ipswich not long before the attack took place.

The prosecutor told the court: "There was a full DNA match and when interviewed by police he made no comments.

"He was a resident on the same housing estate as the victim."

Matthews is the second Ipswich sex offender to be snared following advances in DNA screening.

Earlier this month rapist Phil Collins, 53, and formerly of Dickens Road, Ipswich admitted indecently assaulting a 19-year-old woman in 1991.

He had previously been convicted in 2010 and 2011 of stranger rapes in Ipswich after women were targeted by a masked attacker in 1987 and 1990.

Collins was eventually arrested last year after being caught through advances in DNA following a cold case review by Essex Police.

Speaking just days after the attack, Matthews' victim, who was severely traumatised by her ordeal, said: "I was so scared on the night of the attack that I thought I was going to die.

"I am still very shaken up over what happened and have been suffering from panic attacks. It is affecting my life and I'm scared I won't be able to move on from it.

"I would like to thank the police for all they are doing for me. They have been fantastic."

Matthews is due to be sentenced at Ipswich Crown Court on February 14.

IN a bid to trace the sex pest who attacked a woman in her own home, The Star joined forces with a local business to offer a £1,000 reward.

As officers stepped up the manhunt, Ipswich online car insurance experts, Tiger.co.uk put up the money to encourage anyone with information to come forward.

Speaking at the time, managing director of Tiger.co.uk, Graeme Kalbraier told The Star: "We are happy to offer this reward and to join The Star in this attempt to bring the attacker to justice.

"We are a major employer in Ipswich and everyone in the Tiger team wants this despicable offender caught as soon as possible.

"We joined with The Star's initiative as soon as we heard a reward might well be the vital turning point in the inquiry."

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