

## Old sex assaults solved by DNA, say authorities

Howard Pankratz, Denver Post Staff Writer  
May 26, 2006

Two men suspected in separate 1996 sexual assaults were charged today as result of evidence uncovered in Denver's DNA Cold Case Project funded by the National Institute of Justice.

Lavone Barron, 51, is accused of a June 16, 1996 attack on a 27-year-old woman. The victim was sleeping in her home and awoke to find a man holding a knife to her throat. She was sexually assaulted. No suspects were identified at the time but Barron was recently identified through the cold case DNA project.

Barron is serving a 48-year prison term for burglary.

The second man charged today is Guillermo Barron-Baca, 30, accused of attacking a 33-year-old woman on Sept. 14, 1996.

The victim accepted a ride home with Barron-Baca and another man but was taken to an empty field and was brutally attacked by them, according to Lynn Kimbrough, spokesperson for the Denver district attorney's office.

The other man was arrested within days and eventually pleaded guilty in the case. Barron-Baca was recently identified by cold case personnel. He is serving a 48-year prison term for sexually assaulting a woman in Lafayette.

Although the names of the two men are similar, they are not related, authorities said.

The Cold Case DNA Project is an ongoing collaborative effort involving Denver police detectives, the Denver Police Department crime lab and the Denver District Attorney's Office.

In 2002 and 2004, the Denver Police Department crime lab applied for and received \$893,976 in grant funds to identify and analyze DNA samples. The grant request proposed using the latest DNA technology to re-examine an estimated 700 unsolved criminal cases, including 200 sexual assault cases and 500 homicide cases.

As of May 2005, approximately 2,913 cases had been reviewed. Kimbrough said about 10 sexual assault cases have been filed so far as a result of the project.

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