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NEWS RELEASE

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GUILTY VERDICT IN '96 COLD CASE SEXUAL ASSAULT

A 51-year-old man who thought he had gotten away with raping a woman a decade ago has been found guilty today in connection with the 1996 attack.

Lavern Barron (DOB: 03-12-55) has been on trial this week in Denver for two counts of first-degree sexual assault. Deputy District Attorneys Dawn Weber and Maggie Conboy prosecuted the case, and a Denver jury took just 30 minutes to find him guilty on both counts today.

The victim was 27 years old in 1996. She was asleep in her Denver home when she awoke to find a man holding a knife to her throat. The suspect sexually assaulted her, threatened to kill her and stole her purse before fleeing. The suspect was not identified during the initial investigation.

Denver Police Detectives reviewed this case as part of Denver's Cold Case Project. DNA left at the scene at the time of the attack was analyzed and uploaded to CODIS, the DNA databank, by the Denver Police Department's Crime Laboratory. There was a "hit" matching an inmate in Colorado's Department of Corrections that enabled Denver police detectives to identify Barron as the suspect. Detective Barbara Wimmer investigated the case and presented the case to the Denver District Attorney, who filed formal charges early last year. Barron was serving a 48-year prison sentence for burglary at the time and had been required to provide his DNA for the database when he entered the Department of Corrections.

Barron is scheduled to be sentenced on April 6, 2007 at 1:30 in Denver District Courtroom 12. He faces 16 to 48 years in prison. He is also facing habitual criminal charges.

The Cold Case Project is an ongoing collaborative effort involving Denver Police detectives, the Denver Police Department Crime Lab and the Denver District Attorney's Office with grant funding through the National Institute of Justice. For more information visit online:

http://www.denverda.org/DNA/DNA_Cold_Case_Project.htm