



DenverDA

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NEWS RELEASE –

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PROMINENT DNA “EXPERT” DEBUNKED IN DENVER TRIAL

A forensic scientist who has passed himself off as a defense DNA expert in numerous criminal cases, including cases involving Timothy Masters, Casey Anthony and David Camm, has been discredited as an expert and was not allowed to testify at a recent Denver trial.

Richard Eikelenboom was rejected as a DNA expert by Denver District Court Judge Brian Whitney after a Denver prosecutor got Eikelenboom to admit that he had no direct DNA extraction or analysis experience, that he operates a lab that has not been accredited, that he personally failed his basic proficiency tests in 2011 and 2012, and admitted that he was ‘self-trained’ in running DNA profiles.

The ruling was significant. “I appreciate Judge Whitney recognizing that Mr. Eikelenboom’s opinions about DNA have no basis in science and that he was not qualified to testify as an expert,” said Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey.

Testimony in Denver District Court earlier this week revealed that Eikelenboom has committed fundamental DNA analysis errors by not following accepted scientific standards in the DNA field. In addition to his inadequate training, Eikelenboom strays outside recognized standards by assigning value to low levels of DNA that are below meaningful thresholds and by offering so-called expert opinions on DNA results that are deemed unreliable by accepted standards. Eikelenboom also uses lab practices that cannot assure samples are free from contamination.

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The case Eikelenboom has been called to testify in was a 2013 sexual assault in which two co-defendants were convicted. The case was prosecuted by Denver Chief Deputy DA Dawn Weber and Deputy DA Brenna Zortman.

Temesghen Gebreyohannes (04-02-83) was found guilty of sexual assault (F4), and unlawful sexual contact (M1). **Maicle Abraha** (06-12-90) was found guilty of two counts of sexual assault (F4). They face probation up to an indeterminate to life sentence when sentenced on November 28, 2016.

On November 30, 2013, a 22-year-old woman was in lower downtown Denver at a work-related Christmas party when she became inebriated and then got separated from her friends. The victim woke up the next morning in a motel room with no recollection of how she got there; she had been sexually assaulted. The defendants were questioned as suspects early in the investigation and were formally charged after DNA linked them both to the attack.