



NEWS RELEASE –

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New Grant Will Help Denver Law Enforcement Solve Cold Cases

DENVER—A new \$500,000 grant will enable the Denver Police Department, its Crime Lab and the Denver District Attorney's Office to advance work towards solving 72 violent crime cold cases. The funds will be shared among the three agencies so that work may proceed on unsolved homicide and sexual assault cases for which a suspect has been identified but in which prosecutors have not been able to file charges yet. Leaders with the three agencies announced the three-year grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) during a press conference today. This is the third grant Denver has received from the NIJ totaling more than \$1 million.

"These violent crime cold cases are among the most challenging of all cold cases," said Denver District Attorney Beth McCann. "The potential for more than 70 families to see justice is powerful and exciting and possible thanks to this new funding."

Denver's Integrated Cold Case Project launched in 2004 and has resulted in DNA analysis of more than 1,100 cases, a [CODIS](#) hit rate of 50%, filing of 130 cases and adjudication of 124 cases. The Cold Case Project has been especially successful at identifying and convicting serial rapists such as Byron Gay, Michael Lollis, Warren Foster and Richard DePina and in securing convictions on cases as many as 30 years after the crimes were committed (as was the case with the 2011 conviction of murderer Roderick Elias who raped and killed a young woman in 1980).

"This grant will allow DPD's Cold Case Unit to dedicate additional resources to investigating 72 cold cases that occurred between 1970 and 2016 and that are comprised of eight sexual assaults and 64 homicides," said Denver Police Chief Paul Pazen. "The goal is to advance these investigations to a point where they are ready for a case filing presentation to the DA's Office."

"We reached a critical milestone in 2017 when the Crime Lab finished testing of all cold case sexual assaults which was made possible in part thanks to earlier NIJ grants," said Dr. Gregory LeBerge, Director of the Denver Crime Lab. "That work resulted in six serial killers being identified and linked to cases across Colorado and the United States."

The grant will allow the Denver Crime Lab to pay overtime so forensic scientists may identify, locate, collect, process and analyze evidence to assist prosecutors with the litigation of violent crime cold case. The Denver Police Department's Cold Case unit will apply the funding to utilize overtime and advance investigations where a suspect is identified and potential prosecution is pending. The Denver District Attorney's Office will add a deputy to its existing Cold Case unit. That prosecutor, along with the current Chief of the Cold Case Unit, will work in collaboration with the Denver Police Department and its Crime Lab to develop more evidence in these cases and to prosecute those cases which can be filed.