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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Man Connected to Two Cold-Case Sexual Assaults Convicted
Thanks to Dallas County Sex Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant Team**

(Dallas, Texas) –A man whose DNA directly tied him to two Dallas County cold-case sexual assaults has been sentenced to 60 years in prison under the leadership of Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot.

Adrian Cortes was found guilty by a Dallas County jury after just 19 minutes of deliberation. They later sentenced the 61-year-old to 60 years in prison. At the time of trial, 28 years had passed since the initial assault. Despite the passage of time, both victim survivors testified at trial.

“Sometimes the system fails survivors of sexual assault. The mission of the SAKI project is to go back and right those wrongs. Every single woman in Dallas County deserves justice for the life-changing tragedy that was forced on them, whether it was perpetrated last night, last decade, or in this case, last century,” said lead prosecutor and member of the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office SAKI Team Deborah Bankhead.

“What a powerful display of courage and justice. To hold the man responsible who committed these heinous crimes and to have the women he assaulted aid in that process is simply remarkable,” added Dallas County Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot. “We thank those women for their bravery, strength, and trust in our office that we would see to it Mr. Cortes would pay for his crimes.”

The 2001 Assault

In 2001, a woman was loading her 3-year-old toddler into his car seat in the parking lot of their apartment complex, when an unknown man approached her from behind and forced her into the vehicle with a sharp object pointed at her back. He covered her face with her son’s baby blanket and drove her to an unknown location where he proceeded to sexually assault her all while her child was in the backseat. The man then drove to a final location where he left the woman, her son, and the car and fled the scene. The surviving victim reported the sexual assault immediately and went to the hospital where a sexual assault examination took place, however, the kit from that 2001 examination went untested for nearly two decades.

A SAKI Success

After 18 years, as a part of the Sex Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) program at the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office, the kit was finally tested in 2019 and a case-to-case match provided a new investigative lead for law enforcement.

The case-to-case match came from an unrelated, unsolved sexual assault from 1996. In that case, a young, pregnant woman was walking to the bus stop early in the morning on her way to work, when an unknown man, wearing a ski mask, came up behind her, covered her eyes with a jacket, and put a gun to her head. He threatened to kill her if she screamed. He then dragged her to a nearby field and sexually assaulted her at gunpoint and then fled the location. Again, the surviving victim immediately reported the sexual assault and went to the hospital the same day. A sexual assault examination was performed, however, because there were no workable leads or suspects, the case went cold.

Justice

Years later, the defendant's DNA was uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) as a result of an unrelated conviction. It finally provided the missing link to connect the two sexual assaults and gave a face to the unknown man who attacked these women.

"Our Sex Assault team remains thankful for the money provided in the SAKI Grant that allows this important work to be done. For too long, too many survivors have had to wait for their kits to be tested. Thanks to our SAKI Team we are solving cases and seeking punishments to ensure these criminals don't spend another second outside prison walls," said DA John Creuzot.

Thank you to the entire trial team, including ADAs Deborah Bankhead and Leighton D'Antoni; DA Investigators Jon Wakefield and Kelly Paul; DA Victim Advocates Adriana Sellers, Roquel Mayhorn and MacKenzie Kile; our partners at the Dallas Police Department and the entire SAKI Team, all of whom were instrumental in securing this just verdict.

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ABOUT SAKI

The SAKI Task Force at the Dallas County District Attorney's Office was created in 2015 and was designed to ensure the collaboration between multiple service providers to establish an effective system to inventory, test, investigate and prosecute cases arising out of over 4,000 untested sexual assault kits collected by the Dallas Police Department in sexual assault and homicide cases. This federal funding ensures the personnel of two investigators, two prosecutors, a victim advocate, and a site coordinator which are necessary to assist sexual assault survivors throughout the notification and criminal justice process, track the testing of these kits and their resulting DNA hits, as well as properly investigate and prosecute cases that may arise out of this testing.

Since its inception in Dallas County, the SAKI Task Force has received more than \$6.8 million in federal funding. Thanks to this funding and the crucial work done by the task force, the team has prosecuted seven homicide-related sexual assaults. Since 2015, there have been 128 various indictments. The cases prosecuted to final disposition have totaled 500 years plus 16 life sentences. 88 serial sexual offenders have been identified, accounting for 671 victims.

If you are a survivor of sexual assault and would like more information regarding the status of testing for your sexual assault kit, you may send an email to DallasKits@dallascounty.org or call 972-955-4923. For more information regarding the Sexual Assault Unit's work under this initiative, please visit www.sakitta.org/Dallas/.