



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCSD Arrests Man Accused of Cold-Case Rapes in 1990s

SANTA ANA, Ca. (January 11, 2019) – Orange County Sheriff's Department investigators arrested a man yesterday suspected of committing multiple rapes in the 1990s, including the kidnapping and rape of a 9-year-old girl in Lake Forest. The man was identified utilizing techniques similar to the methods used to identify the Golden State Killer.

The man, Kevin Konther, 53, of Highland, Calif., was arrested yesterday at his home on suspicion of kidnapping and raping at least two victims. The first victim, a 9-year-old girl, was walking home from a convenience store at 6:40 p.m. in Lake Forest on October 21, 1995, when a man grabbed the girl and pulled her into a wooded area inside Serrano Creek Park. The man raped her, and then released her. The girl ran home to report the sexual assault to her parents, who immediately called the Orange County Sheriff's Department. Despite an exhaustive search, the suspect was not located. DNA evidence was collected during a sexual assault exam, but did not match anyone in existing databases. The girl was able to provide details to the investigators to create a sketch of the suspect.

The second victim was a 31-year-old woman who was kidnapped and raped while jogging at 11:30 a.m. on June 2, 1998 on a trail in Mission Viejo near El Toro Road and Marguerite Parkway. The woman was grabbed from behind and pulled into the bushes, where the suspect raped her and fled the scene. The woman sought help from a passerby who called the Sheriff's Department, but the suspect was not located. The suspect's DNA was collected during a sexual assault exam, and the DNA was matched to the suspect from the 1995 rape. Despite having DNA from both victims, investigative leads ran cold.

The DNA was run through law enforcement databases by OCSD investigators and the Orange County Crime Lab multiple times over the course of the last 23 years with no results. Various investigators continued to work the case, hoping to solve these heinous crimes, but no suspect was identified.

In August 2018, OCSD investigators, working with the FBI's Investigative Genealogy Team, employed techniques similar to those used to catch the Golden State Killer utilizing the DNA collected from the rapes.

In an unexpected turn, the genealogy led to two people, twin brothers. Investigators learned that the brothers were identical twins, meaning they share identical DNA. Yesterday, Sheriff's Department investigators arrested both brothers based on probable cause. Subsequent information obtained by investigators determined that Kevin Konther is the suspect in both incidents. The twin brother was released.



ORANGE COUNTY
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

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SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

Konther was booked into Orange County Jail for two counts of felony rape, oral copulation with a person under 14, lewd and lascivious acts with a child under 14, and aggravated sexual assault. He is being held on 1 million dollars bail. He is set to be arraigned on Monday, January 14, 2019.

Despite these cases occurring more than 20 years ago, investigators are asking the public who may have information related to this case to call Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS or occrimestoppers.org.

Thank you to the FBI and the Orange County District Attorney's Office for their involvement in this case.

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