



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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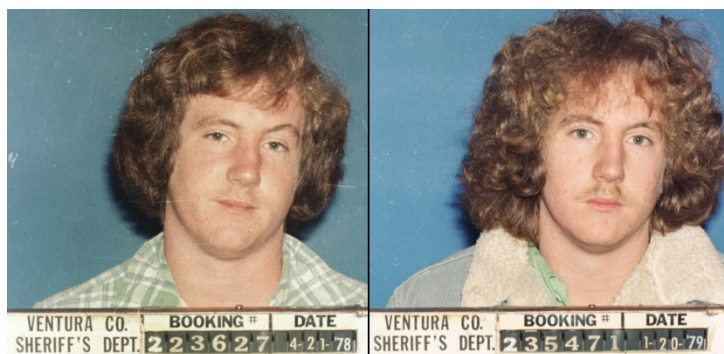
Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@venturacounty.gov

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Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Identifies Serial Rapist, Brings Long-Awaited Answers to Victims

VENTURA, Calif. – The Ventura County District Attorney's Office announced today that following a yearslong investigation, Sean Patrick McNulty (DOB 06/04/59), formerly of Ventura, has been connected to two unsolved home invasion rapes occurring in Ventura in the early 1980s along with four additional home invasion rapes committed in other states. A summary of each of these sexual assaults is attached to this news release. McNulty died in 1997 in Emmett Township, Michigan.

As part of the Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (VCSAKI), the Ventura County Sheriff's Office Forensic Services Bureau oversaw the testing of two sexual assault kits collected from rapes occurring in Ventura in 1982 and 1983. Testing identified DNA belonging to the perpetrator in each case, and those profiles were uploaded to the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). In March 2024, the perpetrator DNA profile from the 1982 case was determined to match the perpetrator DNA profile from the 1983 case. Additionally, the same perpetrator DNA profile matched that recovered from rapes occurring in 1994 in Okemos, Michigan, 1995 in Birmingham, Michigan, and 1997 in Columbus, Ohio.



Sean Patrick McNulty seen in two Ventura County Sheriff's Office booking photos from 1978 and 1979.

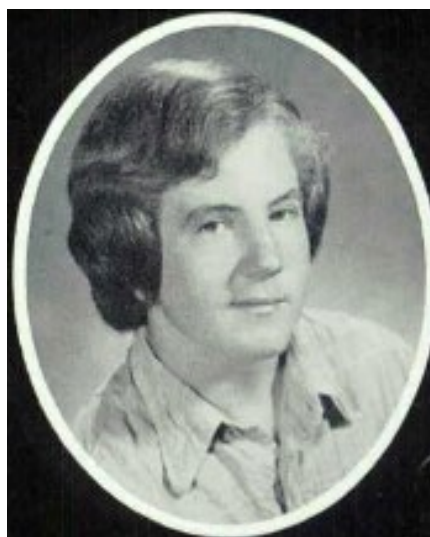
In each of the five cases, the identity of the perpetrator was unknown. An investigator and prosecutor with the District Attorney's VCSAKI team reached out to the agencies in Michigan and Ohio and launched a joint investigation into these serial offenses. The joint investigation included working with an investigative genealogist with the Columbus Police Department in Ohio. The investigative genealogist performed research on the perpetrator's DNA profile and was able to identify McNulty as a potential suspect.

With McNulty identified as a potential suspect, VCSAKI team members worked to locate a source of his DNA so it could be compared to the perpetrator DNA. Team members located McNulty's headstone at a Ventura County cemetery but ultimately learned his body had been cremated and the location of his remains was unknown.

Throughout the investigation, VCSAKI team members worked closely with a crime analyst with the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP). That crime analyst was able to locate a 1993 rape case from Bloomington, Indiana where McNulty was the named suspect. Team members reached out to investigators with the Bloomington Police Department and learned that McNulty killed himself in 1997 after he became a suspect in the Bloomington rape.

At the request of the VCSAKI team, Bloomington investigators searched for evidence in existence in their 1993 case and located a biological sample collected from McNulty. McNulty's biological sample was transported from Indiana to the Columbus Police Department's Crime Lab in Ohio. McNulty's DNA was determined to be an exact match to the 1997 rape in Columbus, Ohio.

The results of Columbus' DNA testing were forwarded to the Ventura County Sheriff's Forensic Services Bureau. Analysis by scientists at the Forensic Services Bureau confirmed that McNulty's DNA matched the perpetrator's DNA profile in the 1982 and 1983 Ventura rapes. Similarly, scientists in Michigan confirmed that McNulty's DNA matched the perpetrator's DNA profile in the 1994 and 1995 rapes. The investigation into other crimes that may have been committed by McNulty both within Ventura County and elsewhere remains ongoing.



McNulty's senior portrait from Buena High School in 1977.

McNulty was born in Burlingame, California but spent most of his childhood in Ventura. He graduated from Buena High School in 1977. In 1978 he was arrested by the Ventura Police Department for placing obscene phone calls to a woman. He served as a diver in the Navy from 1979 to 1992. He was married in 1988 and later divorced just prior to his death.

VCSAKI team members attempted to speak with McNulty's ex-wife to gain a fuller understanding of McNulty's whereabouts during his life, but she refused to speak with them.

McNulty is believed to have lived in or spent time in the following states as well as in the Philippines:

- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Ohio
- Virginia

Individuals who have information regarding any crimes committed by McNulty are encouraged to contact District Attorney Investigator Yumi Kirk at (805) 477-1638 or at yumi.kirk@venturacounty.gov.

VCSAKI team members worked to locate and notify the victims of McNulty's Ventura crimes regarding his identification and death. Only one victim could be located. That victim told the VCSAKI investigator that she had "waited forty years" to receive closure.

"This case demonstrates why the Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative is so important to sexual assault survivors," said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. "Every kit tested has the opportunity to bring critical knowledge to these women, including the knowledge that their perpetrator is deceased and therefore no longer able to harm others. The knowledge that undergoing an exam is not a futile exercise but rather a crucial piece of evidence that can help to identify violent offenders. And, perhaps most importantly, the knowledge that law enforcement and prosecutors recognize that each one of these kits represent a courageous survivor and the enduring voice of a savage crime."

The VCSAKI team also spoke to the Bloomington rape victim, who expressed gratitude for the renewed investigation of these cases. She said, "I am grateful after all these years you didn't give up." The victims from the other cases were contacted by the respective investigating agencies.

"I am proud of the dedicated work of our Forensic Services Bureau and the strong collaboration with our local, state, and federal partners that made these identifications possible," said Ventura County Sheriff Jim Fryhoff. "The results show the importance of testing every kit and pursuing every lead, no matter how old or how long it takes. While nothing can erase the pain and trauma these victims endured, I hope today's announcement brings them a measure of closure."

VCSAKI is a countywide effort that was launched in 2022 to test every sexual assault kit for the presence of DNA and investigate unsolved cases. The initiative is funded by grants awarded by the United States Department of Justice along with funding from the County of Ventura. More information on VCSAKI can be found at saki.venturacounty.gov, including regularly updated data on the status of sexual assault kit testing. Victims of past sexual assaults can also utilize this website to access support services including free counseling in some instances, or to get assistance in determining the status of their sexual assault kit.

The closure of these cases would not have been possible without coordination and assistance provided by numerous law enforcement partners. First and foremost, the District Attorney would like to thank the Columbus Police Department, whose work performing investigative genealogy provided an essential lead in solving these cases.

Additionally, the District Attorney would like to thank:

- Ventura County Sheriff's Office, Forensic Services Bureau
- Ventura Police Department
- Altamonte Springs Police Department (FL)
- Bloomington Police Department (IN)
- Birmingham Police Department (MI)
- FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program
- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Meridian Township Police Department (MI)
- Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (AZ)



Case Summaries of Rapes Committed by Sean Patrick McNulty

March 11, 1982 – Ventura, California

The 32-year-old female victim was planning to move out of the residence she shared with another woman in Ventura. The victim's roommate placed an ad in the newspaper seeking a new roommate. That evening the victim, who was home alone, fielded a phone call from a male caller who was interested in the room for rent. During the conversation, the victim told the caller the general location of the home. Following the phone call, the victim's phone rang again. This time when she answered no one said anything, and she hung up.

The victim walked to the dining room when suddenly a gloved hand grabbed her mouth, and she felt the barrel of a gun placed against her head. A male voice told her "Don't make a sound or I'll kill you." The man asked the victim "Where's your money?" and then ordered her into her roommates' bedroom. He threw the victim on the bed, placed a pillowcase over her head, and bound her hands behind her back with a belt. The suspect then sexually assaulted the victim before fleeing the residence.

On the days following the attack, the victim's roommate received two phone calls where the caller said nothing when she answered.

July 7, 1983 – Ventura, California

The 24-year-old female victim received a phone call while at her residence in Ventura from a man claiming to work for a package delivery company. The man told the victim that he had a package with her name on it, but the address was unreadable. The victim supplied her address, and the man told her a driver would bring the package to her later that evening.

The victim left her residence, and returned shortly after 11:00 p.m. She walked toward her bedroom when suddenly someone grabbed her around her neck and held a knife at her throat. A male voice told her "Be quiet, or I'll slit your throat." He bound her hands behind her back with a belt he had obtained from her bedroom. When she tried to pull her hands loose, he slapped her. He then tied a bandana around her mouth and placed a pillowcase over her head. The man then pushed her on her bed and asked her "Where's your money?" He removed the victim's clothing and sexually assaulted her.

After the man sexually assaulted the victim, he told her “Don’t you dare tell the cops or I will come back and kill you.” He then rubbed the knife he had been carrying on her stomach before fleeing her residence.

May 26, 1993 – Bloomington, Indiana

At approximately 3:00 a.m. the 22-year-old female victim awoke in her bed and saw the outline of a man standing in her bedroom. The man ordered the victim to roll over on her stomach and to put her head under her pillow. He told the victim he was only interested in her personal belongings. She told him where her valuables were located. Rather than taking these items, the man placed a scarf in her mouth and secured it with a belt tied around her head. He placed a pillowcase over her head and taped her hands together behind her back. He then taped her ankles to the corners of her bed and cut off her clothing with a knife. The man then sexually assaulted the victim.

After he sexually assaulted the victim, the man located the victim’s driver’s license and read off her personal identifying information. He then told her “I know all about you, so if you go to the police, I will come back and kill you.” The man then fled her residence.

Approximately a year after the attack, the victim and her family members received a series of suspicious phone calls. After moving to a different state, the victim received a call from someone claiming to be a detective with the Bloomington Police Department. This detective asked her questions about her case that indicated familiarity regarding what happened to her. After the call the victim reached out to the Bloomington Police Department who confirmed that no one had tried to contact her.

Bloomington Police were able to obtain phone records regarding the individual who placed the phone calls to the victim. These records indicated that Sean Patrick McNulty placed the phone calls to the victim from Battle Creek, Michigan.

In 1995, Bloomington Police obtained biological samples from McNulty as part of their investigation. The Bloomington case predated the advent of the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) so McNulty’s DNA was not in the system to be matched to the other rapes.

September 14, 1994 – Meridian Township, Michigan

The 30-year-old victim arrived home and walked through her residence toward her bedroom. Suddenly, a hand covered her mouth, and she heard a male voice say, “Shut up, I have a knife,

and I'll kill you" and "Do you have any money or jewelry?" The victim told the man she had jewelry in her bedroom, and he led her there. Once in the bedroom, the man ordered her to kneel on the ground. The man rummaged in her room and then tied her wrists together with pantyhose. He placed a pair of underwear in her mouth and tied a scarf around her head and mouth. He then placed a pillowcase over her head.

The man ordered the victim to get on her bed, and he sexually assaulted her. Afterwards he fled her residence.

March 1, 1995 – Birmingham, Michigan

The 36-year-old female victim had just arrived home when her doorbell rang. When she opened the door, a man told her that he was a real estate agent who needed to leave a note for a client. He asked the victim if he could have a sheet of paper. The victim turned to retrieve a piece of paper, and the man followed her inside.

He then produced a revolver and pointed it at the victim telling her "I want all your money." The victim gave the man money, but he then demanded jewelry. He told her to go to her bedroom to get her jewelry. Once the victim reached her closet, the man ordered her to the ground. He tied her hands together with a belt, placed pantyhose in her mouth and placed a pillowcase over her head. The man then removed the victim's clothing and sexually assaulted her.

Afterwards, the man then fled the victim's residence.

August 3, 1997 – Columbus, Ohio

The 31-year-old victim was alone in her residence when her doorbell rang. When she opened the door, a man told her that he was her neighbor and that he noticed she had not been home for the past few days. In fact, the victim had been on vacation for the past two weeks. The man told the victim that he had just moved into the neighborhood, but that his utilities were not on yet. He asked the victim if he could use her restroom. The victim allowed the man to enter her residence to use her restroom and directed him to it.

The man shoved the victim into the bathroom. He ordered the victim to get on her knees, placed something against her neck, and said "I have a gun, I will kill you." He demanded to know where her valuables were. The victim told the man her valuables were in her bedroom, and he ordered her to go there. Once in the bedroom, the suspect retrieved a belt and bound her hands with it. He

made her lie face down on the floor and placed a pillowcase over her head. He located pantyhose and placed a portion in her mouth and tied the rest around her head. He then removed the victim's clothing and sexually assaulted her.

Afterwards, the man fled her residence.