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NEWS RELEASE



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Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Testing Leads to Arizona Indictment in Four Cold Cases

VENTURA, Calif. – The Ventura County District Attorney's Office and the Ventura County Sheriff's Office today announced that forensic work conducted as part of the Ventura County Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (VCSAKI) led to the indictment of a suspect in four previously unsolved sexual assault cases in Phoenix, Arizona.

The defendant, Abraham Ramirez (DOB 08/19/70), was indicted in Maricopa County Superior Court on 11 counts of sexual assault and kidnapping.

The case traces back to 1994, when Ventura County Sheriff's deputies responded to a report of a woman who escaped Ramirez after being sexually assaulted. A sexual assault kit was collected at that time, but the case was later dismissed due to insufficient evidence.

As part of VCSAKI, the victim's sexual assault kit was tested, and Ramirez's DNA profile was uploaded into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) by the Ventura County Sheriff's Crime Lab. That match linked him to four unsolved sexual assaults in Phoenix between 1998 and 2013. Maricopa County prosecutors have since filed charges.

"This case proves that no matter how much time has passed, we will use every tool available to pursue justice and stand with survivors," said Ventura County Sheriff Jim Fryhoff. "It is a powerful example of why we remain committed to testing every sexual assault kit in Ventura County."

Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko emphasized the importance of forensic testing in solving long-standing cases. "This outcome underscores the power of DNA testing and the critical role of our crime lab in bringing long-delayed justice," he said. "Even decades later, testing these kits can uncover the truth and give survivors their voices back."

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.