

48-year-old former fugitive, alleged, rapist in 1994 Attleboro cold case held without bail

"A 48-year-old former fugitive arrested last month for the 1994 violent rape of a woman in Attleboro was ordered held without bail today in Fall River Superior Court, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Eduardo Mendez was apprehended last month in New York City on an arrest warrant issued by our office for the 1994 violent rape of a woman in Attleboro.

The crime occurred on June 9, 1994 when the victim was accosted by three men in Attleboro as she walked near the Pleasant Street Bridge in Attleboro. The three men forced her into the stairwell of a nearby building, covering her mouth as she attempted to scream. In the stairwell, two of the men held her down while the third violently raped her before fleeing the scene. The victim immediately reported the case to the police, who responded to the area but were unable to identify any of the suspects. At that location, however, they found the victim's purse.



The victim provided a description of her assailants, noting that the man who had raped her had gold on his teeth. Despite her descriptions of the individuals who had assaulted her, no suspect was identified at that time. The victim was transported to Sturdy Hospital where she was treated and a sexual assault evidence collection kit (rape kit) was recovered.

As part of a county-wide project focusing on unsolved homicides and other violent crimes dating back to the 1970s,

the District Attorney's Office is also working with local police to re-examine evidence from unsolved rape cases from previous decades. This includes testing evidence from rape cases that were not previously tested or by resubmitting evidence to be re-tested using the most recent DNA technology.

This effort is being overseen by the District Attorney's Office's Cold Case Unit in collaboration with the Unresolved Crime Unit of the Massachusetts State Police. In furtherance of this project, the Bristol County District Attorney's Office sought and was awarded 2.2 million dollars of federal grant money to ensure that all untested evidence from old sexual assault cases would be tested using the most modern methods.

In recent years, evidence recovered from the victim of the 1994 rape was sent to the state crime lab for re-testing. The recent testing related to this case revealed a DNA profile that was then uploaded to the national CODIS system. That upload revealed a match to Eduardo Mendez, who was in the national system as a result of a conviction for a stabbing which occurred in New York later in the 1990s.

In addition to the DNA match, the investigation has revealed that Mendez's physical description matches the one given by the victim and that he had lived just a few houses away from where the crime was committed. Investigators also learned that he has gold in his teeth.

The rape kit in this case was sent to a private lab as part of a grant the state crime lab received in an effort to cut into the rape kit testing backlog.

In September of 2020, our office announced that an arrest warrant had been issued in this case, thanks to DA Quinn's Untested Rape Kit Initiative. For the past two years, state police detectives assigned to the district attorney's office, the Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section, the state police's Unresolved Unit, Attleboro Police

and the US Marshals have been actively searching for this defendant. Last month, the defendant was apprehended in Brooklyn, NY by US Marshals, the New York City Sheriff's Office and New York City Police.

District Attorney Quinn would like to highlight the work of Attleboro Police Detective Lieutenant Timothy Cook, Jr. and Arthur Brillon of the Bristol County District Attorney's Office's Special Victims Unit for their work on this case.

"I am very pleased that the defendant was held without bail as both a danger to the community and a flight risk. This case was solved because our office helped identify a rape kit that was not tested and requested that the state lab expedite the testing, which they did thanks to a grant they had received," District Attorney Quinn said. "I am very happy for the victim that this 28-year-old cold case has been charged."-Bristol County District Attorney's Office.