



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

P.O. BOX 10070 – BROOKSVILLE, FL 34603-0070 FAX 352 796-0493 PHONE 352 754-6830

Media Release

From: Denise M. Moloney
Community/Media Relations Manager, 352-797-3609

Re: Detectives Identify Suspect in Violent 1983 Sexual Battery Case

Date: January 10, 2019

The violent Sexual Battery occurred in 1983, before any of the current employees even worked at the Hernando County Sheriff's Office. The victim was a helpless 12-year-old girl.

Having obtained DNA evidence from the original crime scene, Hernando County Sheriff's Office investigators, along with personnel from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), recently sought the services of DNA Labs International, a forensic laboratory located in Deerfield Beach, FL and Parabon NanoLabs (Parabon), a DNA technology company in Virginia that specializes in DNA phenotyping and genetic genealogy.

Law enforcement agencies use the company's Snapshot™ DNA Phenotyping Service (Snapshot) and genetic genealogy service to narrow suspect lists and generate leads in criminal investigations. DNA evidence from the 1983 Sexual Battery of the 12-year-old was submitted to Parabon to generate actionable leads for this Cold Case.

The evidence collected in 1983 was reviewed, and it was determined that a sufficient DNA sample (of the suspect) existed.

Using this DNA evidence, Parabon produced trait predictions for the associated suspect. Individual predictions were made for the suspect's ancestry, eye color, hair color, skin color, freckling, and face shape. Parabon's research developed a profile that was consistent with the known suspect's physical description. Additionally, Parabon conducted a genetic genealogy analysis and provided the results to the Hernando County Sheriff's Office.

Hernando County Sheriff's investigators followed up on the lead provided by the genetic genealogy research and have identified **William Louis Nichols W/M DOB/07-18-1941** as the suspect in this violent crime/cold case.

William Nichols died on October 23, 1998 in Orlando, FL. Nichols had a criminal history that included Sexual Offenses that were committed in Wisconsin, prior to him moving to Florida.

Investigation revealed Nichols to have the following criminal history:

- **10-08-1958 – Waupun Wisconsin**
 - Attempted Rape
 - Went to prison
 - Released on Parole – 10-27-1961
 - Early Discharge – 01-01-1964

- **03-24-1972 – Milwaukee Wisconsin**
 - Rape
 - Incompetent to stand trial

- **09-14-1972 – Madison Wisconsin**
 - Rape (3 counts)
 - Dismissed.

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office would like to thank the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, DNA Labs International, and Parabon NanoLabs for the assistance they provided during this investigation and helping to bring closure for the victim.

The Hernando County Sheriff's Office will continue to use evolving technology and investigative techniques, as appropriate, to help solve violent crimes.

There are two photos available of Nichols on the HCSO FB page.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, and remains accountable to them.