Cybergenetics

March Newsletter

Better Justice Through Better Science™

Lydell Grant, second from the right. Photo courtesy of The Innocence Project of Texas (IPTX).

When Science Sets People Free

The Saga of Lydell Grant

On Sunday, March 20th, Cybergenetics was featured on Forensic Files II (Season 3, Episode 7). This new episode explained how – using their

TrueAllele® software – Cybergenetics helped exonerate Lydell Grant. Grant had been imprisoned for 7 years for the fatal stabbing of Aaron Scheerhorn. But Grant didn't kill him.

In July of 2011, the Houston Police Department lab analyzed Scheerhorn's fingernails; they couldn't interpret the DNA mixture data. In March of 2019, Cybergenetics reexamined the same crime lab data using TrueAllele. Their scientists found that Grant was not connected to the crime. Rather, the fingernail DNA came from an unknown man. An historic search of the national CODIS database with the unknown DNA found the killer. Grant was released after 7 years for a crime he did not commit. TrueAllele computing had provided the scientific proof.

Forensic Files II can be watched on many streaming services. The original *Mix Matched* (Season 3, Episode 7) show aired on the HLN cable TV channel. The episode is now available on HBO Max, Sling TV, YouTube TV, Hulu Premium, and Apple TV.

Christopher Tapp

In March of 2017, Christopher Tapp was released from prison after 19 years. He had been wrongly accused and imprisoned for rape and murder. Innovator Cybergenetics used its powerful TrueAllele software to prove that Tapp's DNA wasn't on the victim's clothing; the DNA was from an unknown assailant. TrueAllele's highly informative match information resolved DNA mixtures that other methods could not, helping to exonerate an innocent man.

TrueAllele Exonerations

Florida finds TrueAllele Automation is Reliable Science

In May of 2014, gunman Lajayvian Daniels (20) shot and killed gas station clerk Shihab Mahmud (22) while robbing a Palm Beach County gas station. The crime laboratory developed DNA data from charred clothing, but couldn't fully interpret all the degraded mixtures. Cybergenetics TrueAllele® computer analysis of the evidence made the forensic connection.

Daniels challenged TrueAllele reliability, claiming that the computer system hadn't been "internally validated" according to national standards. But TrueAllele is automated, learning from STR data without needing calibration. While other probabilistic genotyping (PG) software programs need such laboratory settings, TrueAllele's advanced Bayesian computing does not.

The Palm Beach County trial court admitted TrueAllele as reliable science under the Frye reliability standard. Daniels was convicted in 2019, and sentenced to life in prison. He appealed. In February of 2021, the Florida Court of Appeals affirmed the ruling under the Daubert reliability standard.

In Pennsylvania this year, defendant Anthony Spudis (39) attempted the same unsuccessful TrueAllele "internal validation" Frye gambit. It didn't work. Spudis pleaded guilty on March 18th to his 2013 murder of Gertrude Price (97).
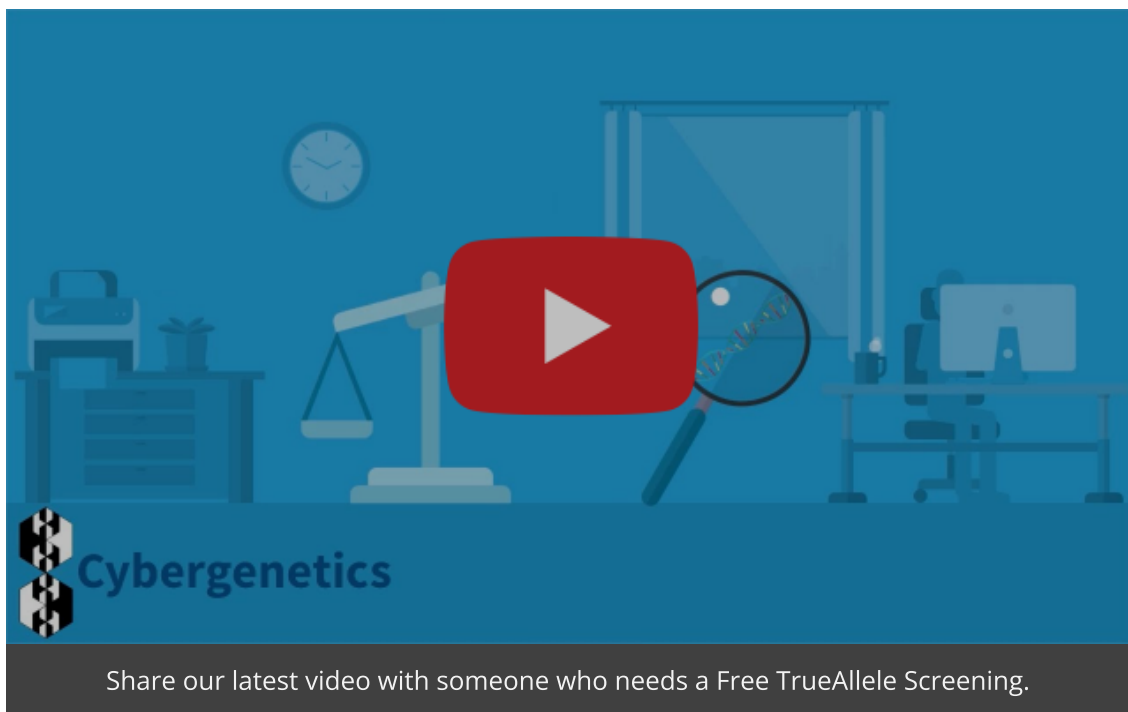
Watch the TrueAllele Reliability Talk

Using TrueAllele with a CODIS-like DNA Database

In Southampton (England) on January 1, 2014, a 33-year-old woman was ambushed in a Hampshire park after a New Year's Eve party. Cybergenetics worked alongside the police to develop crucial DNA evidence. DNA analysis of the rape kit had previously led to a speculative search of the UK National DNA Database (NDNAD) finding 13 DNA profiles. One profile matched Stuart Ashley Burton, who lived near the crime scene. But what about the other 12 men on the database?

TrueAllele reanalysis of the DNA data statistically connected the swabs with Burton, which the lab couldn't do. Just as importantly, TrueAllele showed no statistical connection between the rape swabs and the other 12 NDNAD profiles. The computer had found the right man, and ruled out the others. Mr. Burton pleaded guilty. He was <u>sentenced to 12 years in prison</u>.

Watch the TrueAllele Database Talk

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