

# Court to accept genetic test

by Geordie Greig and Nick Rufford

A REVOLUTIONARY test to decide whether a man is guilty of sexual assault will this week be used in a criminal court for the first time.

Lawyers have persuaded an Old Bailey judge to allow genetic fingerprinting to be used as evidence in a case brought by the police against a man accused of unlawful intercourse with a 14-year-old mentally handicapped girl.

The trial was adjourned for nine days after the judge, Mr Justice Kenneth Jones, agreed to a request from Linda Stern, the prosecution barrister, for permission to use the test.

Blood samples from the man, the girl and her baby, which was born last May,

were last week analysed by forensic scientists. From the genes contained in the blood cells, they can determine who is the father of the child. The case is expected to clear the way for genetic fingerprinting to be used in other sex offence trials.

Using the new technique, rapists will be easily and positively identified if they leave any trace of blood or semen, which can be analysed for its unique genetic signature.

"This is the first time this test has been used in a criminal court proceeding and it is bound to herald a much

greater use of it. The British Forensic Science Service has already said it will revolutionise forensic biology," said Philip Webb, general manager of Cellmark Diagnostics, an ICI subsidiary, which is supervising the tests at its Abingdon laboratory in Oxfordshire.

The genetic test was developed by Dr Alec Jeffries, a reader in genetics, and his research team at Leicester University. It has already been used in immigration cases to establish whether a person's claim to be related to someone living in Britain is justified.

Unlike blood tests, which cannot establish for certain whether individuals are related, no two genetic fingerprints are the same, except for identical twins. Furthermore, the genetic information is carried by every cell in the body, which means that scientists only need minute quantities of tissue or fluid to perform the test. It can be carried out on traces of saliva.

Already, Leicester police have used the technique to test 2,000 volunteers in a hunt for the murderer of two schoolgirls. The technique cleared a 17-year-old youth who had been questioned.

Nick Rufford is on the staff of New Civil Engineer

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This is Exhibit "A" referred to in the Affidavit of HERSHE WOLCH, Q.C. sworn before me at the City of WINNIPEG, in the Province of MANITOBA, this 9 day of NOVEMBER, A.D. 1987.

Barbara Fulkiewicz

A COMMISSIONER FOR OATHS IN AND FOR THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA MY COMMISSION EXPIRES June 3/89

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