

East Area Rapist – Long Term Cold Case Investigation Series Abstract

In June of 1976 an unknown suspect sexually assaulted a resident of Sacramento County. The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department was unaware this would be the first in a series which would span ten years, fourteen law enforcement agencies, and include countless residential burglaries, forty-five sexual assault victims and twelve homicide victims.

The geographic area of the suspect's numerous attacks in Sacramento County led to his moniker, the "East Area Rapist". Two years after his first assault there, he began striking communities in the East Bay Area. In December of 1979 he moved south, killing a couple in their Santa Barbara home. At that time, the crime's connection to the East Area Rapist was unknown. Law Enforcement agencies tracked his continued killings separately from the Northern California crimes, and the suspect became known as the "Original Night Stalker" as he committed eight more homicides between 1980 - 1986.

Over the years, investigators began to theorize there was a link between the northern assaults and the southern homicides. In 2001, DNA linked the "East Area Rapist" cases to the "Original Night Stalker" murders, confirming that theory. But the suspect's identity remained unknown and the case remained unsolved after forty years.

In late 2017, investigators began researching the use of genetic genealogy to aid in the identification of the offender. This work culminated in the identification and arrest of Joseph DeAngelo on April 25, 2018.