



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
TODD SPITZER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Santa Ana Man Identified Through Rapid DNA Program Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Robbing Sex Worker after Strangling her Unconscious**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A man identified by the Orange County District Attorney's Office's (OCDA) Rapid DNA Program as a suspect in a Buena Park robbery has been sentenced to three years in prison.

On September 16, 2022, Jose Eduardo Castro, 32, of Santa Ana, met a sex worker at a hotel room in Buena Park. Castro became upset after he accused the victim of hurrying him and he demanded his money back. When the victim tried to call a friend for help, Castro strangled her until she was unconscious.

When the victim awoke, she saw Castro grab her bag and run away.

The Buena Park Police Department submitted DNA evidence collected from the scene to the OCDA Rapid DNA Program for forensic analysis. On September 29, 2022, the DNA profile from the crime scene sample was matched to Castro and he was arrested on suspicion of robbery. When the case was filed, Castro's DNA profile was not in the FBI's national CODIS DNA database.

Castro was found guilty by a jury on February 29, 2024, of one felony count of second-degree robbery.

For the past decade, OCDA has used the Rapid DNA Program, which can quickly match crime scene DNA profiles to individual profiles in under two hours. The program is available to all local law enforcement and has been responsible for providing investigators with an invaluable tool in solving crimes.

The program receives funding from Proposition 69, known as the DNA Fingerprint, Unsolved Crime and Innocence Protection Act, and is a collaboration between OCDA, the Orange County Crime Lab and local law enforcement.

"Our RAPID DNA program has helped achieve justice for victims of crime faster than ever before by identifying

suspects through the one piece of evidence that is uniquely – and undeniably – theirs and theirs alone,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “Law enforcement is better equipped than ever before through this technology to help bring justice to victims of crime and protect public safety.”

Deputy District Attorney Michael Briante of the Science and Technology Unit prosecuted this case.

The Rapid DNA Program merges the power of the OCDA Local DNA Database with cutting edge DNA technology to provide investigators with leads, including suspect names, within hours of a crime. The program launched in 2014 and is available to all local law enforcement. The RAPIDHIT ID DNA instrument, which was validated for use with the assistance of the Orange County Crime Lab (OCCL), can generate a DNA profile from evidence collected at a crime scene in less than two hours. If suitable, that crime scene DNA profile is searched against the OCDA Local DNA Database, which was established in 2007 and is now the largest consensual DNA database in the country. The Rapid DNA Program is supported by Proposition 69 funding and is a collaborative effort among the OCDA, OCCL and local law enforcement to harness the power of science and technology to promote justice and enhance public safety.

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