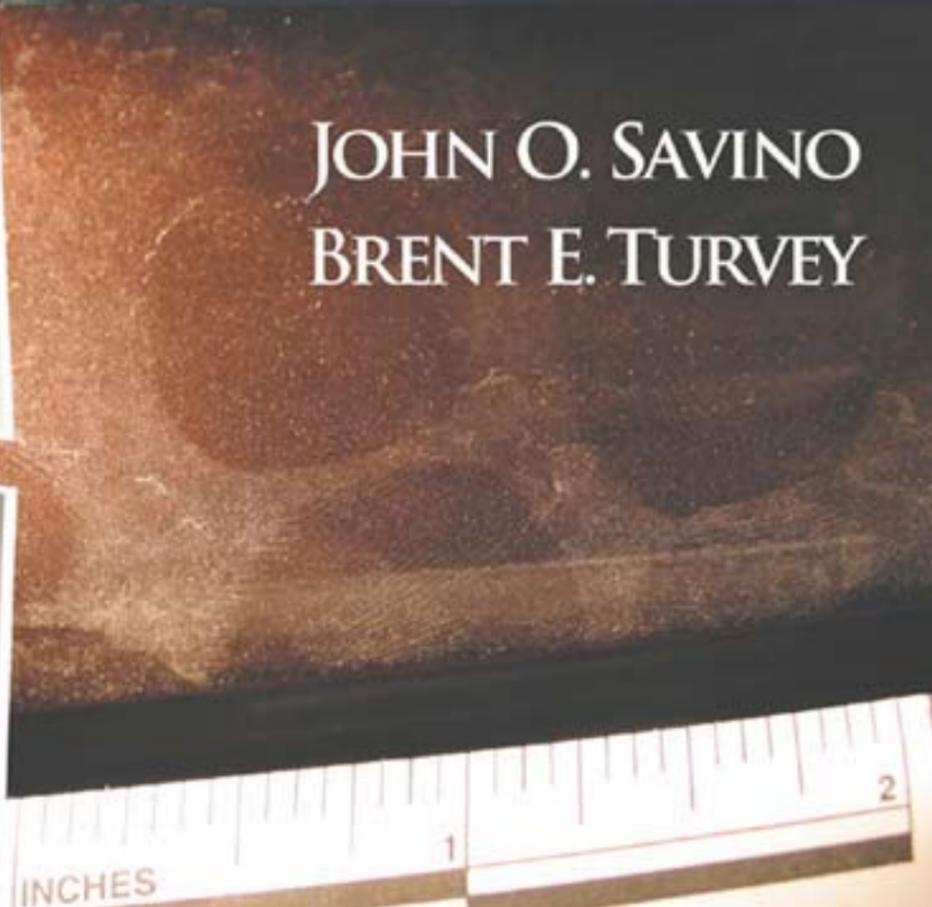


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## RAPE INVESTIGATION HANDBOOK

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be stressed enough. If a perpetrator is prone to fully confess, it will usually be after he is confronted with the myriad of case evidence arrayed against him along with the prospect of future photographic or physical line-ups with confirmatory DNA testing to later damn his cause.

To cajole a partial admission out of a reluctant perpetrator, try working around his upbringing as a child. If he had any sort of religious background at all, invoking the power of truth, guilt, and the value of remorse can be useful. Ask him to at least write a letter of apology to the victim if he cannot bring himself to admit it all to you. Probe his answers and prod his defenses. Find the weak link in his armor.

Again, the literature on interrogation and interview techniques abound. But in DNA-based sex-crime cases a sound denial can often be as good as a complete confession.

*Example:*

In late 2003 a suspect was interviewed by investigators after DNA had identified him as the offender in two gunpoint rapes. The interrogation lasted several hours, and the suspect offered countless inconsistencies that were gently pounced upon and offered back to the suspect to explain. In the end, the suspect knew that he was in deep trouble that he could not back-pedal out of. He was a man who had spent most of his life talking himself in and out of situations. But he still kept trying.

Even after he was told that DNA linked him to both attacks, he still tried to con the investigators. When he realized every time he opened his mouth he was, in effect, building a case against himself, he stopped, got up, shook the investigators' hands, said "Good job, gentlemen, good job," and walked out defeated. He knew that he was going to spend the rest of his life in prison.

### CONCLUSION

When investigating violent and pattern/serial crimes where the offender is not identified, even the smallest link can lead to a breakthrough that can identify a potential suspect. These are some of the most difficult types of cases a criminal investigator can encounter. Consequently, attention to detail is paramount when investigating violent or serial crimes. The circumstances surrounding a DNA-based serial crime investigation makes that point obvious.

Criminal investigators following DNA trails often pursue the most violent and elusive of predators. Often, they are repeat, or pattern, offenders—serial rapists. These cases create a uniquely vexing problem for law enforcement and a unique challenge for DNA investigators. Many rapists do not strike just once. Many lash out and attack repeatedly. Some do so in short brief violent spurts lasting days, weeks, and at times even months. Others pace themselves and burst