

DNA frees man after 19 years in prison

by UPI

ELIZABETH, N.J. - DNA evidence has been used to clear a learning-disabled New Jersey man of the deaths of two children 19 years after he was convicted of the killings.

Byron Halsey, 46, was convicted in 1988 of the 1985 sexual abuse and slaying of his partner's son and daughter, aged 7 and 8 in Plainfield, N.J.

Barry Scheck, co-director of the Innocence Project, the New York legal clinic that revived the case, told The New York Times that new technology exonerated Halsey and identified as a suspect a neighbor who testified against Halsey at his trial.

That man, Cliff Hall, is in prison serving time for three sexual assaults and therefore his DNA was in a state database, the Times reported Wednesday.

The Union County, N.J., prosecutor's office said in a statement Halsey is scheduled to appear in court again on July 9, as he faces trial on the original charges but now with new evidence. Prosecutors declined to say if they would pursue those charges.

Halsey was freed on \$55,000 bail and was sent to Newark, N.J., to a supervised setting where he will get job training, the report said.

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