



ORANGE COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

# NEWS RELEASE

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Suspect in two Aliso Creek trail incidents linked through DNA, Investigators seek community help to ID**

**ALISO VIEJO, Ca. (April 16, 2020)**- Using DNA technology, Orange County Sheriff's Department investigators have linked the suspect from two separate kidnapping and assault incidents that occurred along the Aliso Creek trail in the city of Aliso Viejo, and are seeking the community's help to identify the suspect.

The most recent incident occurred on Thursday, April 2, 2020 when deputies responded to Woodfield Park after a woman reported a man grabbed her from behind and forced her into the bushes off the hiking trail, just east of the baseball fields. The victim, a female in her 30s, fought back and screamed for help, and the suspect fled the area. The suspect is described as a man in his mid-30s, with dark eyes and little-to-no hair, with a muscular build, wearing a black shirt, black shorts and tennis shoes.

On January 20, 2020 a sexual assault occurred in the same area. A 22-year-old woman reported that while she was skateboarding at Woodfield Park, an unknown man attempted to talk to her then unexpectedly grabbed the victim, who fought and screamed during the incident.

Working with the Orange County Crime Lab, suspect DNA was collected from both victims. This week, Investigators were notified that the suspect DNA profiles matched, and that the suspect in both incidents is the same individual but does not match DNA in existing law enforcement databases.

"With this new information, it's vital that this individual is identified and doesn't have the opportunity to attack again," said Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. "While our investigators continue their tireless attempts to identify this suspect, we implore the community to come forward if they have any information to share."

Following both incidents, the Orange County Sheriff's Department set up a task force in an attempt to identify and arrest the suspect. A team of more than 100 Sheriff's Department personnel ran multiple operations in the area. In addition, investigators worked with local businesses on leads and launched a public information campaign that included social media, traditional media and text message alerts. Despite a concerted effort, the task force operations did not result in a suspect being identified.

If you have information or may be able to identify the suspect, contact the Special Victims Detail at 714-647-7419. Anonymous information may be provided through Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS.

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