

Genetic Genealogy Identifies Lawyer as Suspect in Multiple Rape Cases



In a significant breakthrough for law enforcement, a corporate lawyer based in the New York City area has been charged with the sexual assaults of four women in Boston between 2007 and 2008. The arrest of Matthew Nilo, 35, came after police utilized the powerful tool of genetic genealogy to establish a connection between Nilo and the unsolved crimes. Nilo was apprehended at his residence in Weehawken, New Jersey, on Tuesday following an extensive investigation, as reported by various news sources including the Boston Herald, WCVB, and the Insurance Journal.

The technique employed by the police involved uploading the suspect's DNA into a genealogy database, which then utilized familial connections to identify the individual. This innovative approach, known as genetic genealogy, has emerged as a game-changer in forensic investigations, enabling law enforcement to solve previously cold cases. In the case of Matthew Nilo, the genetic genealogy analysis proved instrumental in establishing his link to the series of sexual assaults committed in Boston over a decade ago.

At the time of his arrest, Nilo was employed by Cowbell, a cyber insurance provider. Following the charges, the company promptly suspended Nilo pending further investigation. Cowbell stated that Nilo underwent a background check and was hired in January of this year. Nilo's LinkedIn profile identified him as a "cyber claims counsel" for the company. Furthermore, his online profile with the New York court system verified his graduation from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 2015 and his subsequent admission as a lawyer in New York in 2019.

According to his LinkedIn profile, before joining Cowbell, Nilo had professional experience at Atheria Law in New York City and Clyde & Co. in San Francisco. The Insurance Journal sought verification of Nilo's employment history but did not receive a response from the companies at the time of publication.

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According to Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox, there is a possibility that Nilo was a college student when the crimes were committed. Nilo's LinkedIn profile indicates that he obtained a psychology degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2010. It is disturbing that an individual with a seemingly successful legal career would be implicated in such heinous crimes.

The charges against Matthew Nilo include the following:

- Three counts of aggravated rape.
- Two counts of kidnapping.
- One count of assault with an attempt to rape.
- One count of indecent assault and battery.

The severity of these charges underscores the gravity of the alleged offenses committed by the accused. The legal proceedings will shed further light on the case as it progresses through the criminal justice system.

This arrest serves as a testament to the power of genetic genealogy as an invaluable tool for law enforcement agencies. By leveraging advancements in DNA analysis and genealogical databases, investigators can now make significant breakthroughs in previously stagnant investigations. The successful apprehension of Matthew Nilo underscores the potential of genetic genealogy to bring justice to victims and their families, even years after the crimes were committed.

As the case unfolds, it raises questions about the background check processes employed by employers, including Cowbell, when hiring individuals for sensitive positions. The incident prompts a reevaluation of the screening measures and the importance of conducting thorough investigations into the backgrounds of prospective employees, particularly in roles where they may have access to sensitive information or interact with vulnerable populations.

The arrest of Matthew Nilo serves as a stark reminder that justice knows no statute of limitations. With the aid of genetic genealogy and continued advancements in forensic science, law enforcement agencies are better equipped than ever to pursue and apprehend those responsible for unsolved crimes, providing closure and a sense of justice for victims and their communities.

