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SFPD Chief Scott responds to case potentially involving victim DNA 22-024

Image



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San Francisco Chief of Police William Scott issued the following responses to questions raised today about the purported use of DNA evidence reportedly collected from a one-time rape victim and then allegedly later used to identify and apprehend her as a suspect in an unrelated crime.

The following are attributable to SFPD Chief Bill Scott:

- We must never create disincentives for crime victims to cooperate with police, and if it's true that DNA collected from a rape or sexual assault victim has been used by SFPD to identify and apprehend that

person as a suspect in another crime, I'm committed to ending the practice.

- I am informed that our existing DNA collection policies have been legally vetted and conform with state and national forensic standards. However, there are many important principles for which the San Francisco Police Department stands that go beyond state and national standards. We have long embraced sanctuary for our undocumented immigrant communities, for example, and we years ago ended the practice of using condoms as evidence in prostitution cases.
- We will immediately begin reviewing our DNA collection practices and policies. I have engaged with our City Attorney on this issue, and we are committed to working with our partners at Cal DOJ's Collaborative Reform Initiative, our District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Police Commission, and community-based working group members to pursue any changes necessary that are worthy of our values of "Safety with Respect."
- Although I am informed of the possibility that the suspect, in this case, may have been identified through a DNA hit in a non-victim DNA database, I think the questions raised by our District Attorney today are sufficiently concerning that I have asked my Assistant Chief for Operations to work with our Investigations Bureau to thoroughly review the matter, and report back to me and to our D.A.'s office partners.
- Whatever disagreements District Attorney Boudin and I may have, we agree that this issue needs to be addressed. At the end of the day, our respective departments exist to do justice for victims of crime. The last thing we should ever do is discourage their cooperation with us to accomplish that.

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