

## **DNA Evidence Will Play Key Role In Slaying Trial**

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### **Document Text**

#### **DEFENDANT SERVING 234-YEAR SENTENCE**

**TAMPA - The 71-year-old man died quickly, the fatal injury a stab wound that punctured his aorta and left 6 inches of a kitchen knife blade embedded in his chest.**

**His wife's ordeal has been much longer. She was 72 when the man who had just murdered her husband forced her into the bedroom of the couple's north Tampa home and raped her.**

**That was almost 15 years ago.**

**In a courtroom Tuesday, the man accused of the vicious crime kept his chin to his chest and his eyes lowered as a jury heard the woman describe the morning of June 25, 1987. Now nearing 90, the woman is too feeble to attend the trial, but her testimony has been videotaped. The Tampa Tribune is withholding the name of the victims due to the nature of the crime. Alfred Bernard Harris, a 36-year-old convicted rapist, faces the death penalty if convicted of the murder, rape and burglary.**

**Regardless of the outcome of the case, Harris likely will never taste freedom again. He is serving a 234-year prison sentence for a 1987 rape, robbery and burglary in Tampa. His scheduled release date, with time earned, is January 2203.**

**There was no arrest in the June 1987 murder and rape until 1999, when detectives submitted evidence from the scene for DNA testing not previously available. The sample matched the DNA of Harris, then serving his prison sentence, police said.**

**In his opening statement, Hillsborough County Assistant State Attorney Jay Pruner said the DNA evidence will be bolstered by an incriminating statement Harris allegedly made in a previous hearing. The statement was transcribed by a court reporter, Pruner said.**

**But defense attorney Brian Gonzalez told jurors the case will "rise and fall with the science of DNA." The woman can't identify her attacker. Gonzalez questioned how the evidence was stored and transported between laboratories over a dozen years.**

**"Science will literally hold Alfred Harris' life in its hands," he said. "Don't let science do your thinking for you."**

**The victims' two daughters cried quietly as Pruner described the attack. As a medical examiner took the stand to list their father's injuries - a blow to the head, a 3-inch stab wound to the abdomen and the fatal knife wound - the women left the courtroom.**

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**Abstract (Document Summary)**

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