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## LOCAL

# Rape Victim Sues Harvey Over Untested Rape Kit

February 7, 2012 6:57 PM

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Robert Buchanan, a former Cook County corrections officer, is charged with raping an 11-year-old girl in 1997. (Credit: Cook County Sheriff's Office)

UPDATED 02/08/12 7:46 a.m.

**HARVEY, III. (CBS)** – A 25-year-old woman whose rape kit went untested for 10 years sues the city of Harvey.

As WBBM Newsradio's Bob Roberts reports, the woman says she wants closure, and says the way to achieve that is to bring everything to the forefront.

**LISTEN: WBBM Newsradio's Bob Roberts reports**



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"I feel that my case wasn't handled properly," she said during a teleconference with attorneys on Tuesday. "I want my family to know what's going on. I also want the public to know what has happened to me."

The now 25-year-old woman was 11 at the time of the 1997 rape and is seeking unspecified damages in a seven-count suit that names Robert Buchanan, a former Cook County corrections officer, and the City of Harvey, a release from the Dinizulu Law Group said. Buchanan, 45, was charged last October with predatory criminal sexual assault.

The key to the case was a 2007 raid on the Harvey Police Department conducted by the Cook County State's Attorney's office, the Cook

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County Sheriff's office and Illinois State Police. More than 200 untested "rape kits" — evidence collected in sexual assaults — were recovered.

"Sometimes you have to peel back the onion to understand what's going on. Unfortunately for her, the system broke down," said the woman's attorney, Yao Dinizulu.

A spokeswoman for the city of Harvey, however, said the police "diligently investigated" the incident and "never abandoned the matter."

In 1997, Buchanan was suspected of raping the girl in her home and was interviewed by Harvey detectives, but released without charges. A rape kit was taken from the victim but was not tested until being recovered in the raid.

Harvey spokeswoman Sandra Alvarado said in email that Harvey police Department "diligently investigated this criminal sexual assault. Unfortunately, at that time, criminal charges could not be sustained against any particular individual for this horrific crime."

"Harvey investigators, however, never abandoned this matter. Last year, taking advantage of technology which did not exist in 1997, investigators from the Harvey Police Department worked with LifeLock

investigators of the state's attorney office were finally able to bring charges against Robert Buchanan for the criminal sexual assault of his step-daughter."

"Everything from (the rape) to the present time has been a blur," the woman said Tuesday. "You go on. No one knows. You live your life like everything is normal. I always knew this was not right."

Lawyers allege the woman, who now lives out of state, was notified by an investigator for the state's attorney's office last spring that the kit was never tested.

Last year, investigators obtained DNA from Buchanan that matched DNA in the rape kit, State's Attorney's office spokeswoman Sally Daly said after Buchanan was charged.

The suit alleges Harvey officials failed to protect the victim's rights under the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986. It also claims infliction of emotional distress, willful and wanton neglect, and fraudulent concealment.

Alvarado said the case "predates this administration and it is

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A Crystal Lake Central High School student was arrested Thursday after a hidden camera was discovered in the boy's athletic locker room, police said.

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The victims—identified by the Cook County Medical Examiner's office as 79-year-old Peter Mountain and 80-year-old Sally Lopez—were found unresponsive in a bedroom, according to police.

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Former Chicago Bears and Notre Dame star Chris Zorich has agreed to plead guilty to federal charges of failing to file tax returns for four years.

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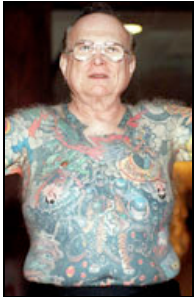
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regrettable that the victim was unable to have her assailant brought to justice due to circumstances that were beyond the control of the Harvey Police Department."

She said the department "takes every crime seriously and is grateful to its steadfast investigators and help given by the Illinois State Police to, hopefully, bring some degree of closure to the victim and her family."

The victim has been diagnosed with suppressed memories and is currently receiving therapy, the release said.

Buchanan was a correctional officer at the time of the incident, but had been on duty-related disability leave since November 2010, the sheriff's office said at the time of his arrest.

He is scheduled for a status hearing at the Markham courthouse on March 9.

*The SouthtownStar contributed to this report, via the Sun-Times Media Wire.*

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