

Should California continue its controversial use of familial DNA to catch, convict criminals?

The “Roaming Rapist” is one of a handful of cases that California authorities have quietly solved in recent years using a controversial technique [called a familial DNA search, which] scours an offender DNA database for a father, son or brother of an elusive crime suspect.

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Eight other states have followed California’s lead, formally embracing the technique as a crime-fighting tool. And though many opponents still express concerns, California’s approach has won over some previous skeptics who say they are impressed with the state’s strict policies limiting its use and the measured successes.

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As more genetic markers for people’s DNA are entered into offender databases, the technology will become more precise, said geneticist Frederick Bieber, a professor at [Harvard University](#)’s medical school....

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But the growing popularity of the technique has raised alarms for some privacy advocates, such as Steve Mercer, chief attorney for the forensic division of the Maryland Office of the Public Defender...Searching for relatives through partial matches is intrusive, he said, and raises concerns about the 4th Amendment’s prohibition on unreasonable search and seizure.

“It is a slippery slope,” he said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The controversial DNA search that helped nab the ‘Grim Sleeper’ is winning over skeptics](#)