

Crime Lab Expert Admits Falsifying Job Data

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PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 16 (UPI)—A case-by-case review was ordered today of all "expert" testimony given during the past eight years in murder, rape, burglary and robbery cases by a repected po-

lice crime laboratory technician who admitted she falsified her qualifications to get the job. District Attorney Arlen Specter said it is impossible to say just how many cases this in-

volves. She has been an expert witness for so long. However, I can say it will involve a great deal of cases.

He said there was a possibility that many cases where Agnes Douglas, 53, testified as a laboratory technician, Mrs. Douglas has examined fibers of clothing, blood stains and flecks, paint, and dust samples, and other bits of evidence to link criminals with their crimes.

In some cases, her testimony was crucial in convictions of murderers, rapists, robbers and burglars.

She shocked a courtroom Wednesday during a murder trial, when, under oath as an "expert" witness, she admitted she falsified her qualifications 21 years ago on a city Health Department job application by stating she was a biology-chemistry graduate of Temple University and a certified medical technician.

Nine years ago, she obtained the crime laboratory job with the Police Department, which pays \$7106 annually.

Her admission was drawn out by Attorney John Patrick Walsh, 60, who has been a prominent defense lawyer for almost 30 years.

Walsh, armed with her city personnel records subpoenaed from the city and outside information, pointed out the discrepancies in her background and she admitted she never attended Temple University nor was a certified medical technician.

Mrs. Douglas' admission came shortly after she had testified that hairs similar to those of an accused murderer were similar to those found on the bloodstained undergarments of a woman who was strangled in a hotel room.

Dr. Edmund J. Burke, head of the crime laboratory and her immediate superior, said she was "one of the best" criminal laboratory technicians in the Nation. He said he saw no reason why she couldn't continue at the laboratory as an instructor because "she is better than anyone we could ob-

tain on the open market as an instructor."

Further in her defense, Dr. Burke said that whatever qualifications she listed when she took the job with the Health Department, "she is tops in her field. She started from scratch and improved herself by reading and going to school."

Mrs. Douglas testified as an expert several years ago in the case of a handyman who was sent to the electric chair in the sex-slaying of a teenage girl.

The American Civil Liberties Union said her "false testimony certainly taints the evidence and presents a great doubt as to the credibility of all her testimony."

Mrs. Douglas said she falsified her qualifications because "I needed the job and put it down because I had a special kind of training."