

Voice Prints Held Valid for Use as Evidence in Court

ANNAPOLIS, April 7 (UPI)—The Court of Special Appeals handed Maryland police a significant crime fighting tool today when it ruled that results obtained from spectrographs—voice prints—can be admitted as evidence.

Maryland thus became the sixth state to allow the controversial tests to be admitted into evidence.

The ruling upheld the rape conviction of James Reed, who was charged with assaulting a Montgomery County woman in 1974 and whose voice was later taped by county police.

Court records said the tape was made as Reed telephoned his victim to arrange another meeting. He was subsequently arrested.

The woman was unable to physically identify Reed in a police lineup, but she did identify his voice. The spectrograph also matched Reed's voice with the telephone tape.

Maryland law allows results of scientific tests to be admitted as evidence, including breath tests, fingerprints and urine analyses. Results from lie detectors are not admissible in court.

The court noted that scientists disagree over the accuracy of spectrographs, but it was convinced that they should be admitted into evidence.

"What has been proven acceptable scientifically is usually legally admissible evidence, but what is legally admissible is not necessarily scientifically accepted," the ruling said.