

Jacob Flees and Laban Pursues (31:17–55)

Grace Chapel February 14, 2010 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

JACOB STOLE AWAY WITH ALL THAT WAS HIS; RACHEL STOLE HER FATHER'S IDOLS (31:17–21)

LABAN PURSUED JACOB, WAS WARNED NOT TO INTERFERE W/ JACOB & COULD NOT PROVE HIS ACCUSATIONS, SO THEY MADE A TREATY & LABAN LEFT IN PEACE (31:22–55)

(31:22–25) Laban pursued Jacob, but was warned not to interfere with Jacob's plans

(31:26–30) Laban charged Jacob with stealing his daughters, grandchildren & teraphim (small idols)

(31:31–32) Jacob said that he was innocent

(31:33–35) Laban could not prove the theft allegation

Leviticus 15:19ff. refers to ceremonial uncleanness for women at the time.

(31:36–42) Jacob made a counter-charge that Laban had cheated him, despite Jacob being honorable to Laban, so that it is only because of the God of Abraham that Laban has not taken away all of Jacob's possessions

(31:43–54) Jacob and Laban made a peace treaty at Galeed
Jegar Sagadutha (Aramaic) and *Galeed* (Hebrew) both mean *The Heap Is Witness*.

Mizpah refers to *watching* (by the Lord)

(31:55) Laban returned to Haran

SUMMARY

Kirk Bloodsworth was sentenced to death for a 1984 rape-murder he didn't commit — it took nine years for DNA to exonerate him, and another decade for it to link another man to the crime

Kirk Noble Bloodsworth, a former Marine discus champion, was exonerated by [DNA](#) in 1993 of the rape and murder of nine-year-old Dawn Hamilton — a crime for which he was sentenced to death in Baltimore County, Maryland, in 1985. After Bloodsworth's conviction was reversed in 1986, he occupied a cell directly above that occupied by Kimberly Shay Ruffner, who was serving a sentence for another rape and who — a decade after Bloodsworth's exoneration — would be linked by DNA to the rape and murder of the Hamilton child.

The principal evidence purporting to link Bloodsworth to the crime was the testimony of five witnesses who placed him either with the victim or near the scene of the crime at the time it was believed to have occurred. The prosecution also introduced forensic evidence purporting to link a pair of his shoes to marks on the victim's body.

The Maryland Court of Appeals overturned Bloodsworth's conviction in 1986 after finding that the prosecution had illegally withheld potentially exculpatory evidence from the defense, *Bloodsworth v. State*, 307 Md. 164 (1986). However, Bloodsworth was retried, again convicted, and sentenced to two life terms. That conviction and sentence was affirmed on appeal, *Bloodsworth v. State*, 76 Md. App. 23 (1988).

In 1992, however, Centurion Ministries of Princeton, New Jersey, helped Bloodsworth obtain court approval for testing of biological material preserved from the crime with a then-emerging DNA technology known as PCR (polymerase chain reaction). The tests, performed by Edward T. Blake, of Forensic Science Associates, in Richmond, California, incontrovertibly established Bloodsworth's innocence. After the FBI confirmed the results, Bloodsworth was released June 28, 1993. He was the first U.S. death row prisoner to be exonerated by DNA. In December 1994, Maryland Governor William Donald Schaefer granted Bloodsworth a full pardon based on innocence.

Nine years later, in the spring of 2003, a Baltimore County forensic biologist who was studying evidence from the case found stains on a sheet that had not been analyzed. Investigators ordered DNA testing and ran the results through the national DNA database, which linked Ruffner to the crime. Bloodsworth, who had been the prison librarian in his later years of incarceration, had regularly delivered books to Ruffner and the two had lifted weights together. Ruffner arrived in prison just a month after Bloodsworth and knew about Bloodsworth's case, his attempts to win a new trial, and his claim of actual innocence. However, Ruffner said nothing to lead Bloodsworth to suspect that Ruffner had killed Dawn Hamilton. Bloodsworth learned the news from prosecutors shortly before Ruffner was formally charged with the crime on September 5, 2003.

The State of Maryland paid Bloodsworth \$300,000 for lost income, based on the rough calculation that he would have earned some \$30,000 a year for the years from his arrest to his release.

The foregoing summary was prepared by Rob Warden, executive director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. Permission is granted to reprint, quote, or post this material on other web sites with appropriate attribution.