Press Release: Central Homicide Cold Case Unit

Type of Incident: Cold Case Homicide

Date/Time Written: August 18, 2010

Date/Time of Incident: October 18, 1977 at 11:30 PM

Location(s) of Incident: 5458 Mission Blvd, Rubidoux "Jimmy the Greek's Bar"

Reporting Officer: Sergeant Scott Brown #1347 Central Homicide Unit

File Number(s): E77291094

Details:

On August 18, 2010, The Riverside County Sheriff's Department's Cold Case Unit solved and closed an unsolved homicide case dating back to October 18, 1977. Frank Erickson Wright (born in 1951), was 26 years old in 1977, was identified as the homicide suspect in this case. Frank Wright died in 2002, at the age of 50, from complications related to alcohol abuse.

On October 18, 1977, James Anagnos (also known as "Jimmy the Greek") was 66 years old and the owner of a local bar in Rubidoux. At 11:30 PM, he was found dead inside his bar at closing time. Mr. Anagnos was stabbed twenty times with a steak knife and hit in the head four times with a blunt object. The stab wounds were not deep and not fatal. The cause of death was the injuries to his head. Mr. Anagnos had some hair clenched in his hand that appeared to have come from the suspect during the assault.

Investigators in 1977 learned that James Anagnos was involved in an argument with Frank Wright about one hour prior to closing his bar. Mr. Anagnos forced Wright to leave the bar. Investigators served a search warrant and found clothing at Wright's house that had been washed. The clothing appeared to have blood stains. Due to the limitations of scientific technology in 1977, the laboratory was only able to confirm the presence of human blood and a blood type. Unfortunately, both the victim and the suspect had the same blood type. The hair found at the scene appeared to be the same type of hair from Wright, but the laboratory was not able to positively match the hair samples. There were no independent witnesses to the crime, so the District Attorney's Office declined to file charges against Frank Wright.

In 2010, the Cold Case Unit, submitted evidence to Orchid Cellmark, a private laboratory in Texas, for testing. Orchid Cellmark confirmed that hair found clenched in James Anagnos' hand was from Frank Wright.
Since it has been thirty-three years since the homicide occurred, Cold Case investigators contacted James Anagnos' family members about the suspect identification prior to the press release.

The National Institute of Justice awarded the Cold Case Unit with a grant to aid in the testing of DNA evidence in unsolved homicides. The solving of this cold case homicide is based off of Wright's DNA being found on evidence left at the original 1977 crime scene.

This was the third case solved by the Cold Case Unit since being award the grant. Currently, the Cold Case Unit is examining over 70 Unsolved Homicide cases with potential DNA evidence. Thus far, twenty-three cases have yielded suspect DNA, three have been solved, thirteen have been entered into CODIS (a national DNA database), and seven need further work prior to CODIS entry.

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Frank Erickson Wright (born in 1951)