

Homicide Arrest

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07/07/2014

Incident: 187(a) PC – Homicide Arrest

Contact: Commander Darin Schindler, 805-339-4341

Location: Ventura County Jail - 800 S. Victoria Ave

Date/Time Occurred:

Homicide Incident: June 24, 1997 at 12:05 p.m.

Arrest: July 7, 2014, 9:30 a.m.

Officer(s) Involved: VPD Major Crimes, VCSO Cold Case Investigators, Ventura County DA's Office

Suspect(s): Marco Antonio Casillas, 11-23-77, Port Hueneme resident

Victim(s): James (Jake) Bush 16 years – *Deceased 6-24-97*

Report #: 97- 10130

Narrative:

Background

On June 24, 1997, Jake Bush and his mother returned to their residence around noon after a morning of shopping and running errands. Shortly after entering their residence they realized that someone had broken in and committed a burglary while they were away. The victim's mother called VPD to report the break-in while the victim walked around the residence to see if anything had been disturbed. Within a few moments the victim was attacked and stabbed multiple times by the suspected burglar, who had been hiding within the residence. The suspect fled from the residence as the victim's mother went to her son's aid.

The first VPD officers rendered aid to the victim while other officers searched the area for the suspect. The victim was subsequently transported to VCMC and taken in to surgery where he later died from his injuries. The suspect was not located at that time and an intensive homicide investigation followed.

Early in the investigation witnesses assisted a police sketch artist with a composite drawing of the suspect that they had seen fleeing from the residence at the time of the crime. Over the past 17 years, VPD Detectives and Ventura County Cold Case Investigators have investigated hundreds of leads and potential suspects but no arrest was ever made. Despite the lack of a viable suspect, physical evidence from the crime scene was periodically checked with known criminals and investigators continued efforts to follow up on all potential leads.

2014 Investigation

In March of this year, VPD Major Crimes Investigators were notified by the Department of Justice that forensic evidence collected from the 1997 crime scene had been matched in the state's known offender database to Marco Casillas. With the identification of Casillas as a suspect, VPD detectives teamed up with investigators from the Ventura County Sheriff Cold Case Task Force and the Ventura County District Attorney's Office to focus in on Casillas's activities from the time before the 1997 homicide until present day. This investigation culminated in further analysis of forensic evidence, re-interviews of witnesses to the 1997 crime, and the service of multiple search warrants.

On 7-7-14 at 0930 hours, Investigators with the Ventura Police Department Major Crimes Unit arrested Marco Casillas for the 1997 homicide of Jake Bush committed in the commission of a burglary. Casillas was arrested at the Ventura County Jail where he was serving a sentence on unrelated charges.

The family is relieved and grateful that their son's killer has been apprehended and they are anxious to cooperate and assist the prosecution in seeking justice for Jake. They also do not want to jeopardize the prosecution in any way and therefore will not be making any statements to the media. The family requests the media respect and honor their privacy during this emotional and difficult time.