



PRESS RELEASE



Two Orange County Cold Case Murders Solved Through Multi-Agency Effort Using Investigative Genetic Genealogy

Orange County, Calif. – The cold case murders of two Orange County women have been solved as a result of a joint Investigative Genetic Genealogy (IGG) investigation by the Garden Grove Police Department, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, and the Orange County District Attorney's Office. This is the second Garden Grove cold case murder that has been solved with the help of the Orange County District Attorney's Investigative Genetic Genealogy unit in the last year.

On May 21, 1987, Shannon Rose Lloyd, 23-years-old, was found deceased in a bedroom she rented in the city of Garden Grove. An autopsy revealed that Lloyd was sexually assaulted and died by means of strangulation. All leads were pursued, but the case went cold.

In 2003, the Orange County Crime Lab linked Lloyd's homicide with a 1989 Orange County Sheriff's Department cold case homicide. The body of Renee Cuevas, 27-years-old, was found along Lambert Road near the El Toro Marine base in the morning hours of February 19, 1989. Detectives refused to give up the search for the killer.

It wasn't until 2021 that the Orange County District Attorney's Investigative Genetic Genealogy team identified a possible suspect – Reuben J. Smith, a Las Vegas man who had committed suicide in 1999 at the age of 39. A year before committing suicide, in July 1998, Smith was arrested in Las Vegas for sexual assault and attempting to kill a third woman. DNA evidence from Smith's arrest and the DNA profile found at the crime scenes of Lloyd and Cuevas's homicides were a positive match.

"The evil in him. I know if I didn't fight, I was going to die" said the surviving victim from the 1998 attack. The victim, who did not want her identity disclosed, said "It was horrible. The things that he did, the things that he said. He told me he was going

to kill me." She fought back and was able to escape, but this attack still haunts her to this day.

Tom Lloyd, who is Shannon's older brother, described Shannon by saying, "she was tough. She wasn't scared of much." Tom added, "It's hard for me to fathom how anyone can take another person's life and just discard them." Tom is grateful for all the hard work by everyone involved in the solving of his sister's murder.

"The advancements in DNA science and the work of the IGG unit has been instrumental in solving our second cold case homicide within the past twelve months," said Garden Grove Police Chief Tom DaRé. "I know with our continued partnership with the Orange County District Attorney's Office, we will be able to solve many more cold cases and bring closure to the family members of these victims."

"The outcome of these cases reflects Orange County law enforcement's dedication to seeking answers and solving complex crimes," said Don Barnes, Orange County Sheriff-Corner. "It reinforces our commitment to the community that no matter how much times passes, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of justice and the work to bring closure to the victims' families."

"The loved ones of Renee Cuevas and Shannon Lloyd have the answers to the question they have been asking for more than three decades," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "The justice that every victim deserves was hidden away in DNA, but with advances in IGG technology combined with the relentless dedication of generations of detectives and the talented prosecutors and forensic scientists at the District Attorney's Office, we now know who killed Renee and Shannon. Justice does not have an expiration date. Whether a crime happened forty years ago or four minutes ago, the residents of Orange County can have confidence that the law enforcement in this county will not rest until justice is served."

Reuben J. Smith lived in Orange County in the 1980's before moving to the Las Vegas area. Anyone with additional information about Smith's activities when he was living in Orange County is asked to call Garden Grove Police Detective T. Ramirez at 714-741-5839 or Orange County Crime Stoppers at 1-855-TIP-OCCS.

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