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For Immediate Release - Media

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TYPE OF INCIDENT: “Happy Face Serial Killer” Cold Case Homicide - Victim Identification

LOCATION: California State Highway 152, Unincorporated Gilroy

CASE NUMBER: 93-000-9045A

DETAILS:

On 06/03/1993, a deceased female body was located on the side of California State Route 152 in Unincorporated Gilroy. At the time of the incident, the female’s body was dressed in blue clothing and her identity was unknown. Due to the unknown identity of the female adult, Cold Case Detectives later referred to Jane Doe as “Blue Pacheco”. The Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner’s autopsy report cause of death was classified as “undetermined”. A nearly thirty-year investigation was conducted by Sheriff’s Office Detectives on identifying both the homicide suspect and the identification of “Blue Pacheco”.

In 1994, an Oregon newspaper ran a five-part series “The Happy Face Serial Killer”. An anonymous letter-writer claimed to have committed five murders throughout the West Coast. Four of the five cases were unsolved. The person behind the anonymous letter-writing was later identified as suspect Keith Hunter Jespersion, also known as the “Happy Face Killer”, who signed his anonymous letters with a happy face symbol. While Jespersion has claimed to have killed several people, eight murders of female adults have been confirmed over the course of approximately five years.

In 2006, Jespersion submitted a letter to the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office admitting to sexually assaulting and killing an unknown female subject along a dirt turnout on Highway 152.

In July 2007, Jespersion pled guilty to killing the unidentifiable female subject, later referred to as “Blue Pacheco”, for felony 1st degree homicide. Blue Pacheco’s identity was still unknown at the time of conviction.

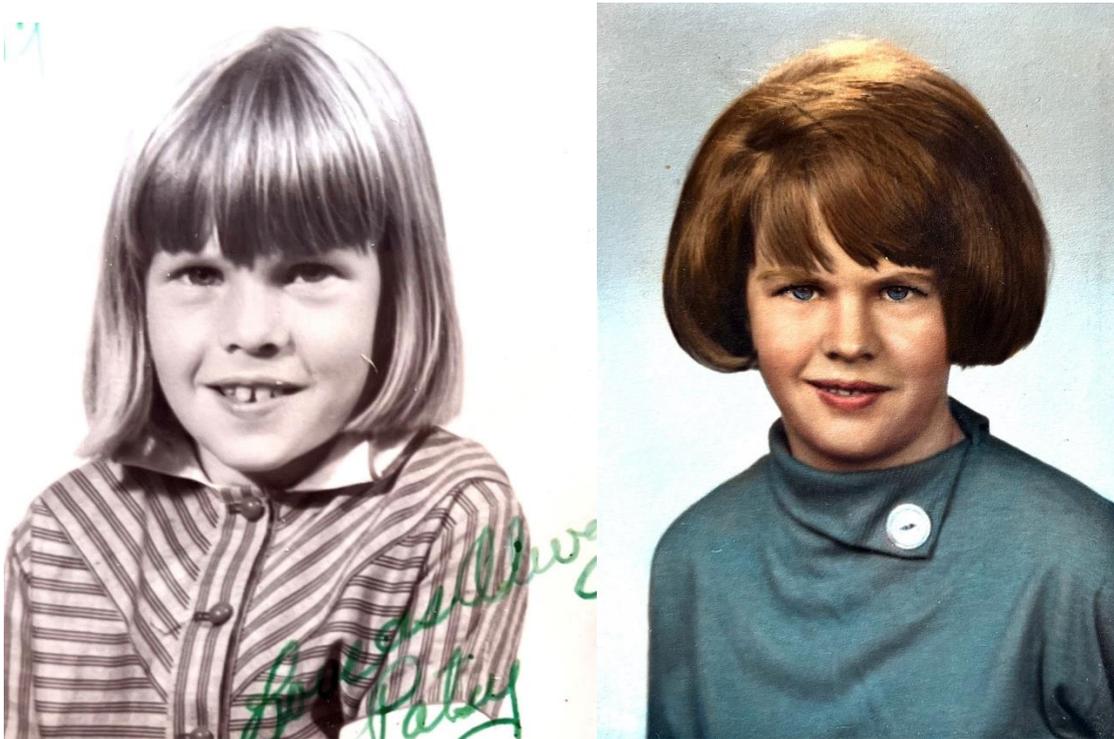
In 2019, Sheriff’s Office Cold Case Detectives evaluated the “Blue Pacheco” case to follow-up on leads and used advanced investigative genetic genealogy in an attempt to identify “Blue Pacheco”. Cold Case Detectives partnered with the DNA Doe Project, a nonprofit organization that provides investigative genetic genealogy services to identify “John and Jane Does” for law enforcement agencies throughout the country to assist with unsolved cases.

Prepared By: Deputy Russell Davis
Approved By: Assistant Sheriff Dave Lera

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On 4/13/2022, after pursuing multiple leads, Cold Case Detectives were able to identify “Blue Pacheco” as Patricia Skiple, known to family and friends close to her as “Patsy”. Patricia was a mother and long-term resident of Colton, Oregon. Patricia would have been approximately 45 years old at the time she was killed.

Although this criminal case was adjudicated, detectives never gave up as they worked diligently throughout this investigation to provide closure for the family of Patricia Skiple. We would like to thank the DNA Doe Project, Oregon State Police Criminal Investigations Division, including Detective Jim O’Connor, and the Calgary Police Service, including Detective Ken Carriere and Analyst Amy Lemieux for their assistance throughout this investigation.



Photographs of Patricia Skiple