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Police Solve 40 Year-Old Cold Case Homicide

San Diego- On March 21, 1979, two young children returned home from school and discovered their mother's bloody body in the living room of their La Jolla home. The children ran to a neighbor's house and the police were called. When the officers arrived on scene, they found Barbara Becker had been murdered.

Barbara Becker was a 37 year-old wife and mother of two boys, ages 7 and 9. Barbara Becker sustained numerous sharp force injuries and based on the evidence at the scene, she put up a tremendous fight for her life. The evidence also indicated the suspect was injured in the attack, as there was a blood trail left behind.

Homicide investigators worked diligently to solve the vicious murder, but eventually all of the investigative leads were exhausted and the case went cold. As with all cold case homicides, evidence is routinely compared to emerging forensic technology. At the time of Barbara Becker's murder, only blood typing was available. When DNA became an accepted forensic technology, the suspect profile developed from the crime scene was uploaded into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS), but no matches were found.

In October of 2018, the San Diego Police Cold Case Unit and the San Diego County District Attorney's Office Cold Case Unit reached out to the FBI's Investigative Genealogy Team for assistance. The group worked together and were eventually able to identify a potential suspect using public access genealogical databases. The investigation also identified direct family members of the potential suspect. Those relatives were contacted and provided voluntary DNA samples, which were compared to the DNA profile developed from the evidence at the scene.

Paul Jean Chartrand was identified as the source of the blood from the crime scene. Family members confirmed Chartrand lived in the San Diego area at the time of Barbara Becker's murder. During the investigation, it was learned that Chartrand died in Arizona

in 1995. Chartrand had a previous arrest the year prior in Los Angeles which would have made him subject to DNA testing and his DNA profile legally suitable for upload into CODIS however, he died prior to the full implementation of the database.

The entire investigative team is grateful the case has been solved however, it is tempered by the fact it took forty years to give Barbara Becker's family the answers they deserved and that Chartrand was able to avoid justice for 16 years after Barbara Becker's murder. Barbara Becker's family has been notified of the developments and requests their privacy be respected at this time and ask not to be contacted by the media. The Chartrand family has expressed their condolences, and requests their privacy be respected as well.

The San Diego Police Department would like to thank all of the partners who assisted in this investigation including; The FBI Investigative Genealogy Team, The San Diego District Attorney's Office and the San Diego Police Department's Cold Case Unit.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the Homicide Unit at (619) 531-2293 or Crime Stoppers at (888) 580-8477.

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