



Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

Tommy Gage, Sheriff

February 14, 2008

Media Advisory For Immediate Release

Magaly Vilchis Mendoza was 15 years old and was born in Benito Juarez, Michoacan, Mexico. Mendoza moved to the United States to attend school and create a better life for herself. She wanted what we all desire, to live the American dream.

In 2003, Magaly Mendoza was residing with her half-sister, Rocio Vasquez Cruz, in the 8100 block of Hartford Street in Houston, Texas. Her parents remained in Mexico where they often kept in touch by letters. Mendoza attended Chavez Middle School in Houston where she was an attentive student and enjoyed being with her friends, as most teenagers do.

Rocio Cruz was 24 years old and was separated from her husband, Freddy Jaime Cruz (AKA- Jaime Zapata Herrera). Freddy Cruz lived in the 4000 block of Duval Street in Houston and worked off and on. Rocio was employed at a Houston area fast food restaurant and supported her two children, Raul Cruz (16 months old), and Freddy Cruz Jr. (4 years old). Victims' family told Detectives that Freddy Cruz is the biological father of Raul, but not Freddy Jr.

During 2003, Rocio Cruz filed several reports with the Houston Police Department, in which she alleged that Freddy Cruz was harassing her. Subsequent investigation revealed that Freddy Cruz was very jealous and had been violent with Rocio in the past.

On September 22, 2003, an employee of a Willis (Texas) wrecker service was taking trash to a dumpster located adjacent to the roadway in the 14000 block of Hwy 75 in Willis, Montgomery County, Texas. This location is just north of Calvary Road.

The wrecker service employee detected a foul odor and upon investigation, discovered a decomposing body, later identified as Magaly Vilchis Mendoza, lying in tall grass in the ditch. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office was contacted.

Detectives and Crime Scene Investigators from the sheriff's office responded and began their investigation. Magaly Mendoza's body had been at this location for probably two weeks. She had been bound with duct tape and dumped along this remote portion of Hwy 75. No identification was found with the body and her identity was not known at the time. An autopsy revealed that she had been murdered.

Detectives examined the shoes recovered from Magaly Mendoza's body and utilized an alternate light source device, which visually enhances trace evidence. During this process, the name "Magaly" was observed in faint writing on one of the shoes. In addition, jewelry recovered from the body was inventoried.

Detectives went to the media for help and the story of the unidentified body in Montgomery County was aired on local media stations, including Spanish language channels. With the assistance of the media, Magaly Mendoza's family in Houston contacted the sheriff's office and told Detectives that their 15-year-old niece had been missing for about two weeks. The unidentified body found along Hwy 75 in Montgomery County was subsequently identified as being Magaly Vilchis Mendoza after her mother in Mexico provided a known DNA sample.

During Detective's interaction with Magaly's family in Houston, they learned that Rocio Cruz had also been missing for approximately two weeks. MCSO Detectives interviewed Rocio's husband, Freddy Cruz, in Houston. Freddy Cruz told them that on approximately September 14, 2003, Rocio Cruz had dropped off their children and the children's clothing on Duval Street and stated that she was leaving with two males that were accompanying her. One of the males threw the children's clothing on the ground and the other male threatened Freddy with a handgun and warned him not to follow. Freddy Cruz told Detectives that he did not see Rocio again, but that an unknown female delivered Rocio's 1995 gold-colored Hyundai to him and left keys with his cousin, stating that Rocio wanted him to have the car.

During the investigation, Detectives searched the Hyundai in Freddy Cruz's possession and found that it contained a large amount of blood. It was obvious that someone had met with foul play inside the vehicle. DNA testing would later reveal that blood in the car belonged to Rocio Cruz.

Investigators with the Houston Police Department began working with MCSO Detectives. On September 9, 2003, the Houston Police Department had responded to a dead body call in the 500 block of Fennell Street in Houston. The body of an unidentified female had been found in the ditch, along with bags of clothing. The woman had been stabbed to death somewhere else and her body dumped. The unidentified body was later positively identified by fingerprints as Rocio Vasquez Cruz. Her body had been found days before she was supposed to have delivered the children to Freddy Cruz.

Investigators with the Houston Police Department charged Freddy Cruz with Rocio Cruz's murder. When they began searching for Cruz, it was discovered that he had fled with the children. Magaly Mendoza's murder went cold due to a lack of evidence.

Recently, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Squad began reviewing the murder of Magaly Mendoza. During their re-investigation, existing evidence was subjected to forensic testing. Based on newly obtained information in this case, Cold Case Detectives have charged Freddy Cruz with Magaly Mendoza's murder.

Cold Case Detectives are searching for Freddy Cruz, who could be in the Houston area or in Mexico. It is believed that he is still in possession of Rocio Cruz's two children.

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Detectives believe that Freddy Cruz was actually staying with Magaly Mendoza at the Hartford Street address in Houston after killing Rocio Cruz. It appears that Freddy Cruz was having Magaly Mendoza care for the children, while telling family members and friends that Rocio Cruz was in the hospital. He told others that she was in jail. Magaly Mendoza may have been killed when she started asking questions about her sister's true whereabouts.

Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Detectives are seeking the public's help in locating Freddy Cruz and the two children. They have asked assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in obtaining the cooperation of the Mexican government if it is found that Freddy Cruz is in Mexico. Detectives want to hear from anyone that possesses any information regarding Freddy Cruz, any information concerning the murders, the whereabouts of Raul Cruz and Freddy Cruz Jr., and any ties that Cruz may have had to Montgomery County. Montgomery County Crime Stoppers is offering a reward in this case.

Anyone with information is asked to contact crime stoppers or Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Detectives direct at 936-760-5837.

Information Source:

Detective Thomas Duroy - Cold Case Squad-Homicide Division

1 Criminal Justice Drive

Conroe, Texas 77301

936-760-5837

thomas.duroy@mctx.org

THE SUSPECT

(Wanted)

Cruz, Freddy Jaime (AKA- Herrera, Jaime Zapata) DOB- 12/21/1975 (AKA - DOB- 06/09/1975) Hispanic Male, 5'03", 120 lbs, Black / Green. **WANTED FOR MURDER OUT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY & HARRIS COUNTY.**



Magaly Vilchis Mendoza (15 yoa)



Rocio Vasquez Cruz (24 yoa)

