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SFPD Solves Cold Case Homicide from 1992 25-005

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The San Francisco Police Department announced today an arrest warrant was issued regarding a cold case homicide from 1992.

On the morning of May 2, 1992, a deceased woman was found in a utility corridor on the unit block of Hang Ah Alley in San Francisco. The woman was later identified as 45-year-old Nancy Hernandez. The San Francisco Police Department responded to the scene and determined that Hernandez was an unhoused woman using the space as lodging and was the victim of a homicide. The homicide was initially investigated by Inspectors Harry Walwyn and Ora Guinther.

The San Francisco Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined that the victim had been badly beaten and strangled. During the autopsy, the Medical Examiner took swabs to confirm that Hernandez had been a victim of sexual assault. In 2005, Inspector Kervin Silas sent those samples to the Crime Lab.

On October 11, 2023, the San Francisco Police Department Homicide Cold Case Unit reopened the case. The Crime Lab entered the DNA profiles into The Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). The profiles matched an offender named Ricky Dawson. Dawson has been linked to three other sexual assault homicides in Panama Beach, Florida, Seattle, Washington, and Denver, Colorado. Dawson is currently awaiting trial for murder in Denver.

On January 2, 2025, an arrest warrant was issued for Ricky Dawson for the murder of Nancy Hernandez. The warrant was sent to the Denver Sheriff's Office, and a hold was placed on Dawson. He will be transported back to San Francisco after his trial in Denver.

“No matter how old a case is, this is proof that we will never rest until a case is solved,” said Chief Bill Scott. *“I want to thank our homicide and cold case investigators who have worked diligently on this case to bring justice to Ms. Hernandez and her family.”*

While an arrest warrant has been issued, anyone with information regarding this case should contact SFPD at [1-415-575-4444](tel:415-575-4444). You may remain anonymous.

SFPD CASE# 920-691-117

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