



MEDIA RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Sheriff-Coroner

5200 Soquel Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

(831) 454-7611 FAX: (831) 454-7608

Jim Hart

Sheriff-Coroner

Media Release: May 18, 2023 Cold Case Homicide Victim Identified

On Saturday, February 13, 1988, the skeletal remains of an adult male subject were found down an embankment off Bonny Doon Road. The identity of the decedent was not known at the time, and an autopsy revealed the manner of death to be homicide. No persons have been arrested in this investigation, and the decedent has been designated as "John Doe" since the initial discovery.

In 2020, the Santa Cruz County Sheriff-Coroner's Office, including the Sheriff's Office Forensics Services Division, began utilizing forensic genetic genealogy techniques to finally identify the decedent and make notification to next of kin. With the partnership of the California Department of Justice Jan Bashinski DNA Lab, Parabon Nanolabs, and the Menominee County Sheriff's Office, the decedent has now been positively identified as Marty Robin Rugar, who was born in 1966. Detectives have learned that Marty Rugar was last known to reside in Mississippi. According to his family, Marty went missing in 1983. The timeline of his arrival in California is not clear.

Marty Rugar's siblings have been notified of his identification and are thankful to the Sheriff's Office for the opportunity to lay him to rest.

The Sheriff's Office is actively investigating the circumstances of Marty Rugar's death. Anyone with any information regarding Marty is asked to contact Sheriff's Investigations Division at (831) 454-7630.

PREPARED BY:

Ashley Keehn

Public Information Officer

Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office

Follow us on:   