

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

Office of Public Information

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Joseph Lombardo, Sheriff

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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42-Year-Old Homicide Cold Case Solved Using Advanced DNA Testing, Genealogical Work

The LVMPD has identified the suspect in the murder of Kim Bryant, a 16-year-old girl who went missing in January of 1979 and was found dead almost a month later.

Using Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing®, Othram Inc., a Texas-based forensic sequencing laboratory, was able to link DNA evidence left on Bryant's body to then-19-year-old Johnny Peterson, said Homicide Lt. Raymond Spencer during a press conference on Monday. Further testing by the LVMPD Forensic Laboratory confirmed the findings.

On January 26, 1979, Bryant was reported missing after she did not return home from school. She was last seen that day at a fast-food restaurant on North Decatur Boulevard, near U.S. Highway 95. On February 20, 1979, Bryant's deceased body was discovered in a desert area near West Charleston Boulevard and South Buffalo Drive. She had been sexually assaulted.

Detectives now believe Peterson abducted Bryant the day she went missing, then sexually assaulted and killed her. Peterson died in January 1993, but his identification as the suspect serves as a reminder to the families of murder victims that the LVMPD will not stop investigating these crimes, no matter how much time has passed.

The testing done by Othram Inc. was made possible thanks to a financial donation from Las Vegas resident Justin Woo, who approached the LVMPD to help further a cold case investigation using advanced DNA technology. Detectives selected Bryant's case for submission to Othram. Othram performed the DNA testing and genealogical research and returned investigative leads to LVMPD detectives.

LVMPD Homicide Cold Case detectives are constantly reviewing cases, looking at advancements in technology, and reviewing tips in order to identify those responsible for taking another person's life. Anyone who would like to donate to the Homicide Cold Case unit to help further the investigation of other unsolved murders may do so by going to <https://lvmpdfoundation.org/> and designating a donation for the "Homicide Cold Case Unit."

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