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10 homicides Cops on trail of unsolved murders

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As 1973 fast becomes a memory for most people, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police are still working on 16 unsolved murders — grim reminders of the past year.

The 40 homicides handled by police in 1973 represent a small decrease over 1972 when 44 murders were reported.

According to Lt. Beech Avants, head of the homicide section, robbery and fugitive details, the investigations into the 10 unsolved murders are going along well.

Avants said homicide investigations take time, but arrests were expected in several of the cases within months. Police still had good leads in most of the cases and only a few were at a dead-end, he said.

The unsolved cases have been complicated because no witnesses were found. In only one of the cases did anyone report seeing anything and that turned out to be only a vague description of a person seen leaving the scene.

One of the more baffling cases began Feb. 5 when the skeleton of an unidentified woman was found near the road to Searchlight about 2.5 miles south of Railroad Pass.

The skeleton was said to be that of a woman about 30 years old and had been in the desert from 10 months to a year before it was found by a group of rockhounds digging in the area.

Homicide detectives of the Clark County Sheriff's Office said certain evidence led them to believe foul play was involved with the death.

The skeleton still has not been identified and the Metropolitan Police, now handling the case, said they were waiting for more evi-

dence.

Three days after the skeletal remains were found in the desert, a 37-year-old Las Vegas man was gunned-down as he walked along a downtown sidewalk.

Richard M. Snyder who lived at 213 N. Ninth St. was found lying on his back with his hands in his pockets. He had been shot in the back of the head twice.

Because his hands were in his pockets, police theorized he was attacked from behind or by someone he was familiar with. But no suspect was ever found.

Footprints found a short distance away indicated the victim may have been walking with a club-footed person before the shooting.

About a month later, another murder occurred which has not been solved.

On March 5, the body of Tee Lampkins, 25 of 1000 DuMont Blvd. was found in a car parked in a lot at McCarran International Airport.

Lampkins was shot once in the left side of the head and a passerby notice the body slumped on the floor of a rented Thunderbird.

Detectives said the car had been parked in the lot for two days but they were not sure how long the man had been dead. So far no progress has been made in the case.

On April 16, the bones of a 14-year-old girl, missing since 1971, were found in the desert near Lone Mountain Road.

Police identified the dead girl as Susan R. Perron, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Perron of Las Vegas.

She was first reported missing in June, 1971. The bones, which were later identified as hers, were found in May, 1973 by a horseman on an outing in the desert.

According to detectives, the girl died from a blow to the head from a blunt object. They said she had been dead from six months to a year when the bones were found and few clues to the murderer's identity have been uncovered.

On May 5, 1973 another mysterious murder took place when a 19-year-old housewife was strangled to death in her apartment at 2750 E. Bonanza Road.

Barbara Jane Kirk was found in her apartment by two neighbors who broke in when they noticed smoke seeping from the residence.

Police questioned the woman's husband in connection with the murder and he was released. Police said they were not sure of the motive for the killing and had little information to go on.

Another unsolved murder occurred June 18 when an unidentified Oriental man was found drowned in a bathtub of a Strip hotel.

Police have not been able to identify the 40-year-old man and don't know why he was killed.

The man was discovered by a maid who entered the room to clean up. Police estimated the body may have been in the bathtub for 12 hours before it was found.

Two 1973 murders which remain unsolved involved gamblers, one a Caesars Palace boxman shot to death in a parking lot of a Strip racebook and the other a Four Queens poker boss shot and stuffed in the trunk of a car about 30 miles north of Las Vegas.

Boxman William Klim 49, was shot twice and then run over June 22 police said. His killer used a light colored two-door car,

according to investigating officers.

Police again could not establish a motive and discounted robbery because Klim carried a large sum of money with him. Klim worked for Caesars Palace since 1966 and became a boxman in 1972.

Poker boss John H. Smith Jr., 60, was found dead in the trunk of an abandoned car in the desert north of Las Vegas Sept. 20. Police said he had been shot twice and perhaps strangled and had been dead about two days when he was found.

Smith had worked at the Four Queens for five years and before that was associated with gambling in Arkansas and Kentucky, officers said.

One unsolved murder from Sept. 21 took several bizarre twists until numerous motives were uncovered.

Robert R. Samsel, 38, was found in the 3900 block of Blackford Place with two bullets in the back of his head.

Samsel was a cab driver by trade but also offered services as a hypnotist and minister of a church he founded himself called the United Family Church of New Truth.

At first, police suspected robbery was the motive for Samsel's death because his wallet was missing when the body was found.

But Samsel had \$14 in his shirt pocket which tended to disprove the robbery theory. Samsel's home provided several startling motives for his murder.

Officers said they found tape recordings of treatment sessions conducted by Samsel in his capacity as hypnotist. They also found numerous pictures showing Samsel and various women engaged in sexual intercourse.

Detectives considered the possibility that one of Samsel's clients or a relative of a client killed him. Extortion and prostitution were also considered but no suspect has been found.

The final unsolved murder in 1973 occurred Oct. 3 when two Las Vegas brothers were gunned down in front of an apartment building at 3601 Cambridge St.

One of the men, Joe Wiley, 36, died in the hail of bullets fired from a passing car. The man's brother, Leon Jennings, was injured in the gangland attack.

Police said the killer was one of three men who drove slowly by the apartments in a late model Lincoln Continental.

Detectives later found Wiley to be involved with prostitution and believed this was connected with his murder. So far no arrests have been made in the case.

In what has not been termed a murder because the cause of death has not been established, a 25-year-old woman was found dead Aug. 1 in the desert near Welter Avenue.

The cause of death for Mary L. Sandquist has not been determined yet by the Clark County Coroner's Office. Until the cause is found, the homicide detectives are not handling the case.

The woman's body was found in the desert after a television newsman received an anonymous telephone tip. Police said the woman had been dead for about two days before she was found.

Homicide detectives are still working on the unsolved murders. are optimistic the cases will eventually be solved, but they admit some may take a long time.

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