



A non-profit, public benefits organization serving families and friends of homicide victims.

Two Newly-Solved Cold Cases!

Both featured in
Citizens Against Homicide News
See 'Hiding in Plain Sight' starting on page 4.



*Our Next Meeting
will be on Sunday,
March 12, 2023
10:00 a.m.*

*Loch Lomond Yacht Club
95 Loch Lomond Drive,
San Rafael, CA*

Inside This Issue

A Few Words From Jan	2
Dates to Remember	2
Cold Cases Solved	4
Emergency Parole Opposition Letter Request	6
Parole Denied	7
Parole & Clemency Hearings	8 & 9
Compensation for Travel Costs to a Parole Hearing	10
Unclaimed Restitution	10

CITIZENS AGAINST HOMICIDE

About Us

The majority of our CAH Board Members have lost a loved one to murder. We will never “get over” our tremendous losses, but we do “get through” the grief. Becoming proactive; assisting/supporting families throughout the most difficult time of their lives and guiding them through the complicated criminal justice system. We have joined together to create a voice for families of homicide victims.

CAH Objectives

- Assist families through the complicated criminal justice system;
- Act as Liaison between families and investigative law enforcement;
- Provide assistance with Parole Opposition Letters;
- Accompany families to parole suitability hearings (when possible);
- Provide trial and courtroom support (when possible);
- Facilitate Reward Billboards (when/where possible);
- Provide information on pending crime legislation

Protecting Your Own Interests

We cannot prepare for the devastating event that changes our lives forever. We can only react. You will need to know how to deal with the subsequent trial, sentencing and (today) the unavoidable parole hearings. CAH will help you take action to protect your own interests.

If you know of a family or friend who may need our help, please share the information we have provided here.

Location for Meetings

We hold bi-monthly meetings on the second Sunday of the month at Loch Lomond Yacht Club - 95 Loch Lomond Drive, San Rafael, CA. The meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. We encourage anyone interested to attend.

A Few Words From Jan

To all our CAH family and friends,

Typically, I have a few “Words” to share with you, however for this edition of our Newsletter I am sharing with you a speech that was recently given by my youngest granddaughter, a sophomore in high school.

I found her words to be very meaningful and moving.

—Til later,
Jan

BY SOPHIA KARIOTIS:

What does service mean to you? By definition, service is “the action of helping or doing work for someone”. Service can have a lot of meaning for a lot of different people. It affects and builds our community and helps us grow in our relationships with others and God. When we commit acts of Service we ourselves grow and become better people.

Growing up I had not been committed to doing service in my community but as I’ve grown up I’ve learned more and more about how service affects others and how good it feels to focus on others besides myself. I think that my lack of service had been for multiple reasons like not having the time or just a lack of interest but, mainly for me, I felt like service wasn’t something that needed to be done. It was something that I honestly did not know a lot about.

After my mom had gotten remarried to my stepdad Dave I had started to grow into someone who I wanted to be but I still felt my relationship with God was

—continued on page 3

Officers

Jane Alexander	Co-Founder Emeritus
Jan Miller	Co-Founder/President
Gene & Shellie Cervantes	Victim Advocates /Consultants/Newsletter
Angela Bushnell Gillam	Victim Advocate /Communications
Boni Driskill	Victim Advocate
Ora Knowell	Victim Representative
(Vacant)	Treasurer
Carol Silveira	Corresponding Secretary
Eryn Cervantes	CAH Consultant
Susan Fisher Legislative	Consultant
(Vacant)	Recording Secretary
Jazzed About Printing	Design & Printing

Advisory Board

Chuck Mitchell	Andi Jarmicki
David Perotti	Terri de la Cuesta
Kit Ball	Joyce Tuhn
Ken Holmes	

Citizens Against Homicide

The UPS Store
369-B Third Street, Box 303
San Rafael, CA 94901
Tel 415-455-5944 • Fax 415-721-0788
E-Mail: vctmsmurdr@aol.com
Website: www.citizensagainsthomicide.org

CAH Victim Advocate:

For advice regarding your individual
murder case, 1-209-728-2873
cahadvocate@yahoo.com

Words From Jan

—cont. from page 2

still very distant. I heard from my stepdad Dave's mother about an organization she runs called Citizens Against Homicide. She had started it because her daughter was sadly taken away from us at a very young age. This organization focuses on raising money for families who have had a family member killed so that they can find the perpetrator and eventually find peace. I met lots of great people who shared their stories and told me how they healed from their experience and how God was part of their grieving process. I found that working there I grew in my compassion for others and learned what it's like to be loved because I saw how losing someone close to you can not only damage yourself but also heavily impact your community. Doing service there got me very emotional and also confused me. I did not understand why someone would take another life. I learned the value of life and the value of the love my community has for me.

When I started volunteering, I was just starting to learn who I was and what kind of person I'd want to be in my community and for God. My relationship with God at the time was very iffy and with the occasional prayer for emergencies or requests. I hadn't really felt a connection with God for anything I did but, when I started to do service for others I felt that God was guiding me and helping me through it all. Learning about some of the stories of the people who were at the event made me realize that when we lose someone in our lives, a piece of us goes with them but, it doesn't always mean that they're gone forever.

It doesn't mean that God took them away; it just means that it was their journey and that God had led these people to peace after such a bad time in their lives. When we do service for others we show up for our community and show that we can help each other grow, find comfort, feel loved, and feel part of something. I can feel the core inside me get stronger and stronger every time I serve someone in some way. When I can help myself grow and help others grow, that's what strengthens my core. Some of us don't have the gifts, money or the time to attend big trips but small acts of service are not only helpful but have a big impact. We each can serve and make an impact and make a difference.

You don't have to go on a big trip to help someone. All you have to do is know that you're helping someone in ways that they cannot help themselves, being there for another person so that they don't feel alone. We can volunteer at elderly shelters, serve food to the homeless, partake in school events that benefit charities or so many more

local opportunities to do service in our community. We can also serve one another. After attending this retreat together, I know that we've learned more about each other and that we can find ways to open ourselves up and serve our class. Whether it's putting aside judgments and going out of our way to be thoughtful, and kind and embrace each other's differences. Whether it's reaching out to someone who has a sick parent or sibling. Maybe it's writing a thank you letter to a teacher who helped you out. I encourage all of you to share your faith and use your heart and hands to lift up those around you. We can look at this scripture line from Matthew "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5: 16). Our inner light and our inner beauty are shown when we work in a community as one. So let's help each other and show God our inner light and our inner beauty so that we may be glorified in heaven.

Dates to Remember

OUR 2023 CALENDAR:

March 12, 2023 • CAH Meeting

May 21, 2023 • Annual Meeting:
Lunch, Celebrating the beginning of our 30th year

July 9, 2023 • CAH Meeting

Golf Tournament • Date TBD

September 10, 2023 • CAH Meeting

November 12, 2023 • CAH Meeting

‘Hiding in plain sight’: Oxnard man charged with 1981 cold-case murders

Jeremy Childs
Ventura County Star

Ventura County prosecutors charged an Oxnard man Thursday with the murders of two young women in 1981, bringing closure to cases that have been left cold for over 41 years.

Tony Garcia, 68, was charged with the murders of 20-year-old Camarillo resident Rachel Zendejas and 21-year-old Oxnard resident Lisa Gondek. He was arrested on Tuesday and booked into county jail.

The arrest follows a joint investigation by the Ventura County Sheriff’s Office, the District Attorney’s investigations bureau and the Oxnard Police Department. It resulted from a breakthrough in DNA evidence analysis known as “genetic genealogy,” according to Sheriff Jim Fryhoff.

At a press conference Thursday, Fryhoff was joined by Oxnard Police Chief Jason Benites and District Attorney Erik Nasarenko to announce the charges and discuss what led to this moment.



“After more than four decades, the long arm of the law has brought justice to the Gondek and Zendejas families, and this has given justice to Tony Garcia,” Nasarenko said.

The two cases have been connected since 2004 when DNA evidence from the Gondek case matched evidence collected from the Zendejas case in 2002. Other similarities exist between the two cases, from the victims’ manner of death via strangulation to the late-night timing both crimes were committed.

However, it was not until the sheriff’s Cold Case Unit reopened the cases in December 2019 that Garcia emerged as a possible suspect. Genetic genealogy DNA analysis corroborated Garcia’s identity as the suspect, although authorities on Thursday declined to provide details on the process.

Fryhoff said Garcia was born in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1954 and enlisted in the U.S. Navy where he was assigned to Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu. After he left the Navy in 1980, he settled down in Ventura County, working jobs including karate instructor and carpenter, according to authorities.

“The fact is: This suspect was hiding in plain sight for over 40 years,” Fryhoff said.

During Garcia’s first court appearance Thursday afternoon, no plea was entered during an arraignment before Ventura County Superior Court Judge Nancy Ayers. The hearing was continued, as requested by both prosecution and defense attorneys, until the afternoon of Feb. 23. The case is being prosecuted by Senior Deputy DA Richard Simon.

Garcia was represented by Brandon Sua of Sua Law Group in Ventura County.

On Thursday night, Garcia remained in county jail with no bail.

Given the active investigation, detectives are seeking additional witnesses. Anyone who may have seen Garcia on the nights of the murders or who has information about him or other possible victims is asked to contact cold case investigators at 805-383-8704 or coldcase@ventura.org.

—continued on page 5



Hiding in Plain Sight

—cont. from page 4

RACHEL ZENDEJAS CASE

Rachel Zendejas was raised in Modesto as the youngest of six siblings. Her family moved to Camarillo when she was in high school.

As the mother of two young girls, Monica and Eva, she moved into an apartment with her bother Roy Rodriguez in the 700 block of Mobil Avenue. She was a student at Oxnard College while raising her children as a single mother.

On Jan. 17, 1981, three months after Zendejas moved in with her brother, she had a babysitter come and take care of the girls. She later drove the babysitter back home. She never returned to the apartment that night.

Zendejas' body was found in a carport across the street. She was discovered the morning of Jan. 18 by two newspaper delivery boys. Her cause of death was homicide by strangulation, the Ventura County Medical Examiner's Office found. There were also signs Zendejas had been sexually assaulted, Fryhoff said.

Rodriguez, now 64, said he resolved to never leave Camarillo until authorities determined who murdered his sister. Every year on the anniversary of his sister's death, he called the Ventura County Sheriff's Office to speak to detectives on the case.

A few weeks after the 42nd anniversary, he and his nieces, who both now work as nurses, were called by detectives to break the news of Garcia's arrest.



"They complimented me to my sisters' girls," Rodriguez said. "They were on a conference call when they told us: 'You thank your uncle Roy for this happening today, because he never forgot and he never stopped.'"

LISA GONDEK CASE

Lisa Gondek never planned to stay in Oxnard.

The Connecticut native took the bus across the country to visit a friend in the Navy in 1981. She liked California enough she decided to stay, renting an apartment in the 1200 block of West Gonzales Road and getting a retail job at the Esplanade Mall, according to Oxnard Police Chief Jason Benites.

The night of Dec. 11, 1981, she went out dancing at the old Huntington's nightclub at Wagon Wheel Junction. Around 3 a.m. on Dec. 12, a neighbor reported smoke coming from her apartment. The Oxnard Fire Department responded and found Gondek's body in

her bathtub. The medical examiner later determined Gondek died from strangulation and suffocation.

Despite detectives pursuing several leads in the case, no suspects were identified until Garcia's arrest.

"We've been working on this case for many, many years and we're glad to see it closed," Benites said.

Jeremy Childs is the East County Reporter for the Ventura County Star, covering the communities of Thousand Oaks, Moorpark and Simi Valley. He occasionally covers courts, public safety and breaking news.



Emergency Parole Opposition Letter Request

**These parole hearings are imminent.
Send letters in support of these families today.**



The family of Elaine Schwartz has requested our help in keeping her killer in prison for the maximum time allowed by State of New York law. Please copy/paste/mail the following sample letter TODAY. Thank you for your support.

(DATE)

SORC
Washington Correctional Facility
P.O. Box 180
Comstock, New York 12821

Re: Denilson Gomez-Jolon
DIN# 21A0695

Please do not grant a parole date to Denilson Gomez-Jolon. Gomez-Jolon (an illegal immigrant from Guatemala) was convicted of 2nd

Degree Manslaughter for carelessly, recklessly and without complete regard for human life, driving his vehicle into 87-year-old Elaine Schwartz while in a crosswalk in July 2020. Fully aware of his actions, he continued to drive over Ms. Schwartz crushing her beyond recovery. Had this illegal immigrant stopped his vehicle, Elaine Schwartz would have easily survived.

Today, it has become obvious that commitment offense is rarely considered during parole hearings. However, just for one moment, think about this killer's victim, Elaine Schwartz and take into consideration Gomez-Jolon's unconscionable act of hit and run. What kind of mind could justify driving into and then

crushing the life out of another human and continuing on with his day like nothing happened? This individual was thinking only of saving himself from being held legally and ethically responsible. Gomez-Jolon's personal decision to run from one's God-given responsibility of human caring and kindness; void of any empathy, ethics, morals and concern for human life cannot be ignored.

Elaine Schwartz was loved and respected by everyone who knew her. She gave so freely of her time to her family, friends and community. She was a special education curriculum consultant for schools and taught in Adelphi University's graduate program in special education. She was a renowned traveler who visited 81 countries since retiring at age 66. She was an amazing and active lady. She was always in perfect health—at the age of 64, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro; at age 80, hiked 165 miles of the Camino in Spain; and just prior to her untimely death, was kayaking in Antarctica.

It is a crime and a terrible lack of justice that this convicted killer is entitled to seek parole before serving every single day of his sentence for the following reasons:

- Elaine was enjoying her daily routine of a 4-mile morning walk. She was

—continued on page 7

Elaine Schwartz

—cont. from page 6

- properly crossing a quiet Village of Greenport, NY street;
- There were no visual obstructions/impediments between defendant and victim;
- Defendant made a right turn on red light;
- Defendant was driving at a very slow rate of speed; could have made an immediate stop;
- Defendant did NOT have a driver's license, car registration or insurance;
- Defendant was from Guatemala and had been illegally residing in the U.S. for 14 months;
- After Elaine was struck by defendant, she landed hunched over on hood of his car;
- According to prosecutors and coroner, driving at such a slow rate of speed, had defendant stopped, Elaine would have been fine;
- Defendant continued to drive over Elaine's body with his front tire and then again—without stopping—drove over her with his back tire crushing her;
- Defendant continued on with his day leaving Elaine Schwartz to die; went to his dentist appointment and then to his landscaper job;
- After work, defendant drove back to his Greenport, NY home where police arrested him. He admitted to police that he was aware he struck and drove over an elderly lady and that he chose not to stop.
- Defendant was convicted of 2nd Degree Manslaughter, leaving the scene of an accident that caused

death, operating a motor vehicle without a license and operating a motor vehicle without financial security (insurance) and was given a mere sentence of 3–9 years in prison (significantly benefiting from a plea bargain deal).

Elaine Schwartz does not get a second chance to live; she is gone forever. Therefore, given the

extensive evidence listed above, Gomez-Jolon does not deserve the privilege of being released before serving the maximum time (9 years) allowed by State of New York law.

Thank you for your consideration.

(NAME/SIGNATURE)



Parole Denied

A “Notification of Administrative Review” regarding murderer/inmate Mark Alan Radke—CDCR# E70238 was received by the family of murder victim, Jeffrey Rudiger.

“ The Board of Parole Hearings (Board) conducted an administrative review pursuant to Penal Code section 3041.5(b)(4) to determine whether or not to advance the above-referenced

inmate's next parole consideration hearing date.

The Board decided not to advance the inmate's next hearing date.”

Our hearts, thoughts and prayers are always with our families who are faced with these very difficult parole hearings. We are so very grateful for this decision.

Parole & Clemency Hearings

**These parole hearings are imminent.
Send letters in support of these families today.**

The family of Ross Elvey has requested our help to keep his murderer in prison where he belongs. I have provided a sample letter to the governor (below) asking that he reverse a recent parole commissioner's decision, whereby Kristopher Kirchner was deemed suitable for parole. Please copy/paste, sign and email your letter immediately to: Parole@GOV.CA.GOV

(Date)

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Email: Parole@GOV.CA.GOV

RE: Request to Review and Reverse
Parole Suitability Finding KIRCHNER,
Kristopher—CDCR# J31375

Governor Newsom,

Please reverse the November 15, 2022
parole commissioner's decision finding
inmate Kristopher Kirchner suitable
for parole.

On April 28, 1993, Kirchner and
co-offender Damien Miller entered
the Vista, California, AAA Guns &
Archery business owned by Ross
Elvey as he was closing up for the
night. The two rushed and then
overpowered Mr. Elvey. Kirchner,
wielding his murder weapon
of choice—a metal pipe, began
relentlessly beating Mr. Elvey over
the head to unconsciousness. They



stole seven handguns and then
exited the store leaving him for
dead. After being chased by a Good
Samaritan, the two assailants were
arrested within 45 minutes of the
brutal attack on Mr. Elvey. He was
life-flighted to Palomar Memorial
Hospital where he underwent
extensive surgery on his head. He
had sustained 25 skull fractures
(some irreparable) and was in a coma
for 41 days before succumbing from
his injuries on June 7, 1993.

While in prison, Kirchner continued
his street gang affiliation and
joined the Aryan Brotherhood.
His criminal and violent activities
continued, including attempted
murder (severely injuring another
inmate by stabbing him multiple
times). Kirchner received a Life

without Possibility Of Parole for
Ross Elvey's murder and 25 to Life
for the attempted murder of an
inmate. Sadly, as a result of pro-
inmate legislator laws, Kirchner
was "gifted" for his past/present
violent criminal behavior and both
sentences were removed. Needless
to say the victim's family did not get
justice and continues to serve a "life
sentence" of loss.

It is a crime and a terrible lack of
justice that this convicted killer is
entitled to a parole hearing at all.
He murdered an innocent man
for personal gain. He attempted
to commit murder again while in
prison. His complete disregard for
human life, sense of entitlement
and savagely heinous actions of
these crimes clearly show he is a
continued threat to society.

Although commitment offense
is now rarely considered during
parole hearings, I am hoping you
will think about this murderer's
victim, 58-year-old Ross Elvey and
take into consideration Kirchner's
brutal and unconscionable act of
violence. What kind of mind could
justify beating the life out of another
human being for the sole purpose
of stealing from him. Kirchner's
personal decision to execute an
innocent man for personal gain
cannot be ignored.

—continued on page 9

Ross Elvey

—cont. from page 8

Ross Elvey was loved and respected by everyone who knew him. He and his wife were living the “American Dream” and had plans for their future after retirement. It is inconceivable this loving family man and friend would be subjected to such a vicious end to his life. Kristopher Kirchner’s insatiable greed literally destroyed the Elvey family for life. Mr. Elvey does not get a second chance to live; he is gone forever. Therefore, convicted murderer Kirchner does not deserve a second chance or the privilege of freedom.

I respectfully urge that you reverse the parole commissioner’s decision, finding Kirchner suitable for parole and ultimately rescind that grant of parole.

Thank you for your consideration.

“Mercy to the guilty is cruelty to the innocent” —Adam Smith

(NAME/SIGNATURE)

TRUTH
*does not mind
being questioned*



A LIE
*does not like
being challenged*

Parole & Clemency Hearings

**These parole hearings are imminent.
Send letters in support of these families today.**

The family of Aron Hagan is requesting our help in keeping his murderer (Dexter Terrell Coleman) in prison where he belongs. Following is a sample parole opposition letter for copy/paste/signature purposes. Please email letters to: BPH. CorrespondenceUnit@cdcr.ca.gov or send via USPS. Thank you for your support.

(Date)

Board of Parole Hearings
P.O. Box 4036
Sacramento, CA 95812-4036

Attn: Hearing Correspondence

RE: Dexter Terrell Coleman
—CDCR# E48016
Parole Hearing Date: April 12, 2023

Dear Chairman
and Parole Board Member,

Please DO NOT grant a parole date to convicted murderer, Dexter Terrell Coleman. On September 20, 1988, Coleman brutally murdered Aron Hagan, while in the commission of robbing him of his vehicle. Coleman shot Aron three (3) times; once in the head, once in the neck and then once in the back. Coleman then left his victim’s lifeless body slumped in the front seat, bleeding to death.

On April 12, 2023, Aron Hagan’s family must, once again, relive the tremendously painful events that led to his brutal and senseless murder. Coleman’s violent and heinous actions not only took Aron’s life, but changed the lives of his family forever. Because of his complete disregard for human life,



lack of conscience and remorse, justice demands this convicted murderer be denied parole. Coleman made a personal choice to execute an innocent human being for personal gain, and must continue to accept the consequences of his actions. Aron Hagan does not get a second chance to live; he is gone forever at the hands of Dexter Coleman. Therefore, Dexter Coleman does not deserve a second chance or the privilege of freedom. He must remain in prison, so that he can never again harm another innocent human being.

I am adamantly opposed to, and request that you please deny parole to convicted murderer, Dexter Terrell Coleman, for the maximum time allowed by State of California law.

Thank you for your consideration.

(NAME/SIGNATURE)

How can you request compensation for travel costs to a parole hearing?

The Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services has funds available through a federal grant which allows for reimbursement to victims and next-of-kin for costs associated with travel to parole hearings.

For information on how to apply for travel reimbursement contact OVSRS at 1-877-256-6877.



Unclaimed Restitution

English

Were you the victim of a crime and the court ordered you restitution? The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation may have collected money for you. Contact the Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services to inquire if you have unclaimed money from a direct order of restitution. To update your address or to obtain additional information, call us toll free at 1-877-256-6877.

Spanish

Si usted fue victima de un crimen y la corte le otorgo restitucion, es posible que el Departamento de Correcciones y Rehabilitacion haya recibido dinero a su favor. Llame a la oficina de Victimas y Sobrevivientes para preguntar si usted tiene restitucion que no se haya reclamado. Para obtener mas informacion, llame gratis al 1-877-256-6877