



St. Petersburg Police Department News Release



For Immediate Release

October 29, 2009

Media Relations Office

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Media Relations Office

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St. Petersburg Police Department Solves 18 year old Homicide

On July 16, 1991 at about 8:21pm, James Butler, 25 years old, returned home after renting a video at a Blockbuster store when he was accosted by an unknown suspect.

Mr. Butler had parked his vehicle behind his home and was preparing to enter the side door of his home when the suspect confronted him and shot him one time in the chest. The suspect then took the victim's car keys and stole his vehicle.

This case has been described as a random, robbery-homicide.

Neighbors heard the gunshot and called the police. Officers arrived and found Butler unresponsive and dying on his outside patio. The gunman left behind his Miami Hurricanes baseball cap on the victim's patio and his bicycle in some bushes nearby.

The next morning, the victim's car was recovered three miles away.

Forensically, we found palm prints from the suspect's bicycle and partial latent prints the suspect's bicycle, but they were insufficient in quality for a submission to AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) for comparison. We also submitted the suspect's baseball cap for DNA processing, but there was insufficient DNA material on the cap to create a profile for comparison at that time.

Over the years, investigators have submitted and re-submitted various items of evidence to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement with no results.

On July 30, 2009, Investigator Brenda Stevenson re-submitted the suspect's baseball cap again to FDLE.

This time, due to advances in DNA forensic technology, FDLE lab technicians were able to create a DNA profile from the suspect's baseball cap and that information was entered into CODIS (Combined DNA Index System).

On October 7, 2009, FDLE notified our agency that the profile belonged to Alphonso Williams, Black/Male, DOB: 7/2/72.

Investigator Stevenson submitted Williams' fingerprints for comparison and our Latent Print Examiners were able to positively match Williams' fingerprints with the partial latent finger prints found on the suspect's bicycle and partial latent palm prints from the victim's recovered stolen vehicle.

Ironically, Alphonso Williams had been the victim of a homicide in St. Petersburg on September 6, 2007.



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In that case, Alphonso Williams and Vashion Manning rode their bicycles away from the Quick Stop Convenience Store at 15th Avenue South and 49th Street South when a white Ford Expedition pulled up beside them in the 1600 block of 47th Street South. A black male leaned out of the rear passenger window and fired multiple rounds from a handgun, killing Williams and striking Manning in the leg. This case is still an open and active investigation.

We have crime scene photos of the Butler homicide available, including those that show the suspect's Miami Hurricanes baseball cap at the scene, the suspect's bicycle hidden in some bushes near the crime scene and the victim's recovered stolen vehicle.

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Information by Bill Proffitt on October 29, 2009 at 09:00am.