



NEWS RELEASE

MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

State Police Cold Case Team Identifies Homicide Victim from 1973

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ZILWAUKEE TOWNSHIP, MICH. With the help of forensic genetic genealogy, investigators with the Michigan State Police (MSP) Third District Cold Case Team have identified a man murdered in March of 1973, found floating in the Saginaw River in Zilwaukee Township.

Just last month, a DNA confirmation from an FBI DNA database confirmed the victim was former Texas resident Daniel C. Garza-Gonzales, born March 15, 1944.

Gonzales was a Vietnam War Veteran who was wounded during the war. After serving his country, he left Fort Worth, Texas, at 29 to look for work in Flint, Michigan. His parents never heard from him again.

Knowing his identity, even nearly 50 years later, is a critically important new lead in this case, and investigators hope it will help them determine who was responsible for his death. Garza-Gonzalez's remains will be reinterred by his family in Texas.

Forensic genetic genealogy continues to unlock mysteries and provide families with answers about their loved ones. Although DNA testing wasn't possible when Gonzales died, investigators are grateful that it brings his family some resolution today.

Cold Case Background

On March 13, 1973, police were alerted to a body floating in the Saginaw River, near M-13, in Zilwaukee Township. With no identification present, attempts to put a name to the individual through fingerprints or other sources proved fruitless.

An autopsy revealed the victim was shot seven times and had blunt force trauma to the back of his head. The medical examiner suspected he was knocked down, shot and discarded into the river before being discovered by a fisherman approximately six weeks later.

Within a year, with nothing further for detectives to investigate, the man was buried in a grave marked "John Doe."

In 2020, the MSP Third District Cold Case Team and the MSP Missing Persons Coordination Unit reexamined the case and exhumed the body for advanced DNA testing. The remains were sent to the Michigan State University (MSU) Anthropology unit for reexamination.

In late 2021, with help from the [DNA Doe Project](#), previously obtained hair samples and a new bone sample were sent to Astrea Forensics for forensic genetic genealogy.

In the summer of 2022, a possible familial match was located with collaboration from the DNA Doe Project. The connection linked the unidentified human remains to a family in Beeville, Texas. With the assistance of the Texas Rangers, the family was informed of the possible identification and investigators

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obtained familial DNA reference samples from several family members that were sent to the FBI DNA lab for comparison.

In December 2022, the FBI confirmed the victim as Daniel C. Garza-Gonzales, born March 15, 1944.

Anyone with information about the 1973 murder of Garza-Gonzales is asked to contact D/Sgt. Bill Arndt 989-615-6257.

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