



**JEANNINE M. PACIONI**  
District Attorney

## ***PRESS RELEASE***

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### **FIVE SUSPECTS CHARGED WITH MURDER DURING FIRST YEAR OF MONTEREY COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE COLD CASE TASK FORCE**

*SALINAS*, California- The victims included a mother found murdered in her Carmel home in 1981, a 22-year-old man ambushed and shot to death in Seaside in 1995, a father and local business owner fatally shot in Salinas in 1999, a 20-year-old man shot in King City in 2016 after being mistaken for a gang member, and a 31-year-old King City man murdered in front of his wife and children in 2017. For years, their murders were unresolved. Within the past year, five people have been arrested and charged in relation to those crimes.

In July 2020, District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni implemented the Monterey County District Attorney's Office Cold Case Task Force, an inter-agency working group designed to assist local agencies with investigating, resolving, and prosecuting their unsolved homicide cases. The Task Force consists of multiple veteran investigators and a deputy district attorney. The Task Force collaborates with the original investigating agency to review cases, develop investigative strategies, conduct witness interviews, do background research, and facilitate the submission or re-submission of items for potential DNA and other scientific testing. With the support and assistance of the local chiefs of police, the Task Force has collaborated with eight local law-enforcement agencies on one or multiple unsolved cases. In the last year, the Task Force has reviewed more than 30 different homicide cases occurring between 1974 and 2018.

The Task Force will collaborate with detectives on any case upon the request of the investigating agency. The Task Force aims to increase inter-agency collaboration, combine the talents and expertise of multiple investigators to examine unresolved cases with fresh eyes, and to demonstrate to the citizens of Monterey County that these victims and their cases have not been forgotten despite the passage of time.

Since April 2021, the District Attorney's Office has filed murder charges in the following cases:

- The murder of 30-year-old Sonia Herok-Stone in Carmel on October 15, 1981;
- The murder of 22-year-old Lloyd “LJ” Perkins Jr. in Seaside on September 21, 1995;
- The murder of 39-year-old Elias Gutierrez Diaz in Salinas on November 19, 1999;
- The murder of 20-year-old Martin Heredia in King City on June 17, 2016;
- The murder of 31-year-old Hipolito Cruz Carreno in King City on March 4, 2017.

All of the charged suspects are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Court proceedings in all five cases are currently pending.

The Task Force has also worked with local agencies to select cases with potential forensic evidence that could be tested or re-tested to identify a potential suspect or suspects. Evidence from multiple cases is currently being tested at the California Department of Justice Crime Laboratory and other private laboratories.

Further information on the Task Force is available at

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/district-attorney/cold-case-task-force>.

If you have information relating to an unsolved homicide, you may contact Chief Ryan McGuirk at [McGuirkRJ@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:McGuirkRJ@co.monterey.ca.us) or Investigator Bill Clark at [ClarkB@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:ClarkB@co.monterey.ca.us).