

## UNSOLVED WITH STEVE GREGORY EPISODE 103

### TRANSCRIPT

#### SEGMENT 1

Announcer

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere on the iHeartRadio app.

Steve Gregory

On any given day in Southern California, hundreds of investigators are working more than 10,000 unsolved cases. That's 1000s of friends and families who have lost loved ones, 1000s of people who got away with a crime, and 1000s of murderers who still walk the streets, killers who may be your neighbor, go to your church, or could be dating a close friend. For the next two hours, we'll highlight cases that have gotten cold, baffled investigators or just needs that one witness to speak out. This is Unsolved with Steve Gregory.

This is San Bernardino County Sheriff's case number 010-80-5905, the Henry number is 2008-41 It was first filed as John Doe 008. It's the murder of Theodore Harvey.

I got a call from Detective Art Alvarado. He works homicide at the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He told me of an interesting case he took over back in 2018 2019. He says they refer to it internally as "the Man in a Box". Now detectives often come up with clever and sometimes humorous ways to refer to cases, it is in no way meant to be disrespectful. But as someone who covers a lot of death, destruction and mayhem, sometimes you need a little levity on the job. The department's about an hour's drive from our Studios in Burbank. And when I arrive it's like Fort Knox, it takes a bit to get through the first line of security eventually, I'm taken back to a large room filled with cubicles detectives are gathered in one area they seem to be discussing the case, I'm taking into a conference room off to the side a rather dull looking but bright room surrounded by white dry erase boards, chairs and tables. I go ahead and set my stuff up and just a few minutes later, Detective Art Alvarado comes in.

This is a very, very fascinating twist in some sort of a great investigative trail to it. And we'll get to all of that. But give us the background what what exactly happened.

Detective Alvarado

This case were first reported to the Sheriff's Department on July 7 of 2008. The reporting party who lived at 15787 Ken Brook drive in Devore, reported that he had found human remains at his residence.

Steve Gregory

Now you refer to this case as "Man in a Box". So he said he found human remains. And so when investigators go out there and just be clear you are not the original investigator on the scene. So we'll get to your role in this in a moment. But so what did investigators find when they got there?

Detective Alvarado

So when they got there, they found what was essentially a metal box that had been buried at the time. So as they started interviewing Mr. Williamson, or we'll call him Gary, interviewed Gary, he said that he was a property manager manager for many years, he had noticed a metal and metal optic sticking out of the ground, just a slight corner of it for over 12 years. He never made much of it. But as he would run into place and its tenant said that they were afraid that this metal object sticking out of the ground little corner of it is going to pop his tire so he decided find me dig it up to see what it was.

Steve Gregory

How big was the box?

Unknown Speaker

The box was about three feet by two feet.

Steve Gregory

Three feet by two feet? And there was the corner that was sticking up and I think you had told me once before that this guy had he'd been driving over it back and forth. Never really thought much of it.

Detective Alvarado

Yes, it was just a corner sticking out little corner of the box sticking out of the ground. But because he's concerned that tires were gonna get pumped so he dug it up. And once he dug it up he punctured holes to the to the metal the box to the terminal was inside and when you look inside, that's when he found human remains. And that caused them to generate a call to us.

Steve Gregory

What was the condition of the remains?

Detective Alvarado

the remains were skeletal. So initially, we had brought the box back to a fire station and we had a fire department help us open that box for us. We had Dr. Steven Trenkle. He was present for it. Initially, when they open it up, they determined it was definitely skeletal remains. And at that later on the schedule an anthropologist, Alexis Gray, to examine those remains.

Steve Gregory

Was it clothed?

Detective Alvarado

There was clothing on the remains.

Steve Gregory

it would it would indicate that the person was put into that box while they were fully clothed.

Unknown Speaker

Yes. And there was other evidence that I can't get into but also suggested that's the subject and it was a victim of a homicide. Oh, and it appeared that it may have been even put there alive.

Steve Gregory

Really? Yes. How do you determine that with skeletal remains?

Unknown Speaker

It just given evidence that we found within the box, suggest that they could have put him or her at the time we didn't know who it was him or her at the time was possible, but they're alive? Yeah.

Steve Gregory

So you refer to it at the time is John Doe 008. So do you do that when you don't know the gender?

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So it's automatically John Doe.

Detective Alvarado

Well, let me clarify, John Doe would be male, Jane Doe, female. When determined it was a male when the anthropologist. She, she checked the remains and she determined that he was a male, and gave us a basic description of that person.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He's what the homicide division we're talking about at the time was known as John Doe 008. Were they able to determine like on the scene at the time? And again, I know you weren't the obviously it was many years before you took the case. But were detectives able to determine how long that body had been in there?

Detective Alvarado

Well, we we determined? Yes, we did. Based off this witness statement, Mr. Williams said that he had saw the box there for at least 12 years. After we took out the remains from the box detectors were they actually started looking looking into the clothing and looking at through manufacturers to see when these clothing may or may not been produced. And they had a general ballpark that it was in the early 90s. That this remains the excuse me, the clothing was created.

Steve Gregory

In the early 90s. And then assuming, you know that at least the remains had been in there for at least 12 years. What was the condition of the remains in that after 12 years, and we're talking about an area of the country that's very dry and hot. And that speeds up decomposition? So what were the bones clean? where they were? Did you have any DNA? Were you able to get skin or anything like that?

Detective Alvarado

Well, there were definitely skeletal remains, the skeletal remains were processed. And what we do is get a DNA profile, or more specifically, or DOJ, California DOJ. And they get that DNA profile and upload that profile and decotis. And that's actually gives Mr. John Doe at least a codec profile number until we can identify.

Steve Gregory

Tell me what decotis is.

Detective Alvarado

It's a database created by the FBI. And there's there's local local coders, databases, their state level ones and FBI level or a national ones. And they all talk to each other. And it's basically a database. It's primarily for offenders. So we have people record for felonies, their DNA will be uploaded to Decotis and it helps investigator solve crimes.

Steve Gregory

Is that also where fingerprints live?

Unknown Speaker

And it's also used to identify also unidentified remains. So if so, we in somebody who kind of get Man in a Box, we'd like to call him we didn't have his profile. So we his code entry was put into a database. And we hope that at the time, we hope that people with hopes that the families will provide their DNA and have the decotis database linked to DNA and help identify.

Steve Gregory

We're going to talk a little bit more after the break about how they started to work to identify this individual but at the time you didn't get hit in the decotis system right now more with detective Alvarado, coming up. Don't forget to go to our website at [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com) keyword "unsolved". More of "the Man in a Box" but first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

## **SEGMENT 2**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. If you'd like to hear the podcast for the program, just subscribe to it on the iHeartRadio app or wherever you get your podcasts.

We're talking with detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Division. He's assigned to cold cases. And we're talking about an interesting one here that they used to refer to as I guess you still refer to it as "Man in the Box". We're talking back in somewhere between 1989 -1998 is when you estimate he passed away or had been initially killed.

Detective Alvarado

That was an estimate.

Steve Gregory

Right? And but we know that he'd been in this box for at least 12 years, a metal box found on some undeveloped property near the foothills. It was a 20 acre lot, I think is what you were talking to us.

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

And before break, we were talking about the decotis system. And that is a sort of a clearing house and database for DNA. You know, DNA is a funny thing. So we're how are you able to get DNA off of these remains? Is that something you've got from the bones or the clothing?

Detective Alvarado

We're criminalists food processing remains, they try any anything they can usually from the body parts, if there's any, sometimes extracted from the teeth, sometimes from bones like femurs if theres any tissue, blood, they would they have various methods to try to get DNA extract from bodies.

Steve Gregory

So they got a fairly good sample of a DNA then.. So they put in the system. And as you told us before, break, no hit. So this guy was not in the system for something else.

Detective Alvarado

At the time in the early 90s. It was not customary to take DNA from people, so or offenders. So it was the database, per se was not as big as it is nowadays.

Steve Gregory

He was found in July of 2008, on a desert road desert road in Devore, California. And as I was talking about earlier, that area is very hot in the summer. Was the box airtight? Or didn't have holes in it? Or was it a newer box and older box?

Detective Alvarado

it was definitely not airtight.

Steve Gregory

What kind of a box was it.

Detective Alvarado

Without getting too specific. I was definitely metal box heavy enough that require at minimum two people to carry.

Steve Gregory

Like a steam trunk kind of thing?

Detective Alvarado

I'll just describe it as a metal box. At this point.

Unfortunately, with the limited evidence that we have. We have to try to hold that in pocket.

Steve Gregory

Completely understandable. And please, I don't want to do anything to jeopardize an investigation. So what are the next steps and so you have these initial investigators, and we're talking back in early 2000s. And so what were next steps.

Detective Alvarado

So going back to miss grade, she initially told us, it was her with her training experience, you believe it with adult male between the ages of 25 and 43. And she estimated the height to be between 5'6-5'9. That's initially what we had in 2008 and in 2011 cold case Investigators decided to send out the head for forensic facial reconstruction.

Steve Gregory

So that's the so they take the skull and that's when they sort of tried to reenact if you will?

Detective Alvarado

So they sent it to San Francisco University, she worked for San Francisco University and she created this bust for us, which we at one point used to make a visual representation of the what believed who was a victim, and hopes to try to identify him because it's still and even to 2011 We didn't know who he was.

Steve Gregory

Looking at this now and of course the photo of this bust this sort of clay sculpture is going to be available on KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved", we have the actual flyer, the bulletin that you folks sent out with that bust on it. And you know, I've always found that such a fascinating science that they're able to take you know, like the cheekbone and the in the in the forehead area and all of that and actually give us an idea of what the face may or may not look like. And in this particular case also showed it was long hair and bushy eyebrows.

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Which would come to find out was kind of exactly who you you spotted, or at least who you identified and match to this so we'll get to that in a moment. So you were talking about between 2008 and 2011 that you will you took the school in 2011 to this this forensic anthropologist but what was going on in that three years between 2008 and 2011?

Detective Alvarado

Well, with these cold cases, we, we hope to generate leads. And that's why we take all these steps to try to push the ball along, if we may, and hopefully, figure out who he is. We didn't know who he was, and we felt no person deserve to end that way. So that's why we took the steps we had to.

Steve Gregory

For three years, then you had you put the information out, and no leads, no tips, nothing?



Detective Alvarado

We would have, we'd have tips, but none of them panned out to the person who believe it was.

Steve Gregory

Yeah. Okay, so now you make the bust, you've got the clay rendering out, then you put out the picture. And when did that when would that picture come out? When was that released?

Detective Alvarado

So that picture was sent out shortly after in 2009. And once we got the bus back, we took a photograph and we will send out a press release and forgive me, I forget the date on that but we definitely press release so when this one out what happened? Just like anything else something you get just generates in the case it this generates leads, but you know, it's it's a bust, it's not it doesn't have a name with it. So people call us and unfortunately those leads did not pan out to the person we believe they realize

Steve Gregory

Approximately how many do you know how many tips I don't know have been top my head a lot though. I mean, there was a lot we did because it's it's interesting. In all the years I've been doing this, when something goes out, you always get an initial flood of calls, as you say it's very, very rare seldom that you get solid leads in that first 24 or 48 hours. Right?

Detective Alvarado

It's it's it's rare, but we always we're always hopeful and we're not deterred. So we follow all those leads, and hopefully we can figure out who the person is.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so 2011 So when did you get the case?

Detective Alvarado

So I personally got involved in 2019 Okay. 2020.

Steve Gregory

So, what had happened with the case from 2011 up to 2019.

Unknown Speaker

So, after the years progressed, we decided to use new DNA advancements and we generated using DNA advancements and investigative leads we we figured out that possibly he was possibly related to a family and we went and contacted a family.

Steve Gregory

We'll talk more about that with detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. But first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

### **SEGMENT 3**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. For a deeper dive on these cases and more go to KFIAM640.com, keyword "unsolved". Also download the podcast and subscribe. It's on your iHeartRadio app, Apple or wherever you get your podcasts.

We're talking with detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Division, he's assigned to cold cases we've been talking about who was known at the time John Doe 008. The remains were found in July of 2008, in a remote area of Devore, California, he was shoved into a metal box. And we've been talking about just a fascinating investigative technique, or at least a tool if you will. And that's a clay rendering based on the skull that was recovered and an anthropologist was able to sort of recreate what they think the facial reconstruction might look like. You said before the break that you were able to get enough from that and some tips and leads and investigative work that you found potential family, right?

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So then what?

Detective Alvarado

So when we found potential family members in late November of 2020, we decided we made a goal to contact this family to see if they know where their family member was, and see if they're willing to provide, a what we would call it a reference buccal swab. So we can compare it.

Steve Gregory

What was that again?

Detective Alvarado

A reference buccal swab or reference DNA

Steve Gregory

Okay. DNA. So you're, you're going for the familial thing.

Yeah. So at that point, what our DOJ or the codice criminals do is they have a profile for at the time was man in the box. So what what our goal is to find a direct family members, preferably a sibling or a parent, we get their DNA and compare and send that DNA to our people, and they compare it one to one and they can tell you if this person is a direct family member. And in essence, again, put a name to the to the remains.

So these family members, though, had they indicated they were missing their loved one.

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So that's so because that's what I was wondering if you're doing these random DNA samples, but they already had indicated someone was missing.

Detective Alvarado

Yes. Well, once at the time, they'd never reported missing, but, but that's why we went flew out there to to meet them.

Steve Gregory

Flew out where?

Detective Alvarado

We flew out to Moscow, Idaho,

Steve Gregory

Really? Okay. And then what did you get from that?

Detective Alvarado

So, we we asked them if they knew where their family member we at the time, we had a name Theodore Harvey. And we asked, Hey, we we haven't seen Theodore Harvey pop up in any recent databases, law enforcement databases, we wonder, you know where he's at? And then that's when they told us that he went missing and we we'd heard he got murdered.

Steve Gregory

They had heard he got murdered?

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So how did they hear about him getting murdered?

Detective Alvarado

Just through acquaintances and or family friends.

Steve Gregory

So that's kind of new information for you then, right? So what did you do with that?

Detective Alvarado

At that point, we were were relatively confident that it was going to Mr. Harvest was going to be the person who has now man in a box, but we still had to get that family members DNA, send it to codis list, and for them to do that the clearing house I just said, and they have to do the one on one and tell us yes, that is Mr. Harvey. And, and it was a it was a hit. And at that point and early '21. We knew it was Mr. Theodore Harvey.

Steve Gregory

And this is after you took the case?

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So it's odd. Do you find it odd that the family was already kind of scuttled button around the fact that he had been murdered?

Detective Alvarado

Well, we did initially but we did more investigation and we learn more about Mr. Harvey and it kind of give us a better background of what was going on in his life. Because the primary goal, there was many goals. First goal was to give this person a name. We did that. And then at that point, you know we can give the remains to the family. Because he deserves to be released to the family. And then we then at that point, we transition. So now that we know who he is, let's find out how he ended up there and who put him there.

Steve Gregory

The description then you got from the family or then at that point, you were probably able to look up DMV, and other medical records or whatever the case was, How close was the anthropologists estimate to how tall he was, what it looked like, How close was that to the actual?

Detective Alvarado

it was very, very close. And in fact, the initial vestigators, when they're just dealing with clothing, they had the early 1999, specifically, that the manufacturers that did create this clothing that this man in the box had at the time. He in fact went missing in 1993. We that's when we learned,

Steve Gregory

so in essence, got the clothing the year it was made. Exactly. That's kind of fascinating. So then you're able to go back and sort of get a timeline or at least put a chronology together. So how helpful was that information?

Detective Alvarado

It's helpful to paint the whole picture, because I think in his criminal cases, the juries demand that they might know the big the whole picture so they can understand what how things transpired and how these things end up in cases.

Steve Gregory

So then, so that we get it all right, then you got man in a box, you did the clear rendering. You put up the flyers didn't get much of a hit on that. But then you threw some investigative work. And you're not telling me that. That's okay. Understandable, but through some investigative work, you were able to find some what you believe to be family members. You do a DNA sample from a family member to see if there's a familial hit through codice. If there is, now you have a name to man in a box, so now he is Theodore Harvey. And what do we know about Mr. Harvey?

Detective Alvarado

Well, we we travel a lot on this, this case, probably about seven different states throughout the country. We criss-crossed the country, trying to figure out who this person was and how and his background and we, we found many of his associates, friends and family. And we learned that he had a troubled life he, him and his brother, which I'm not gonna get his name at this point, but they they lost her mother at a young age, their father was not much of a role model, which kind of led, unfortunately led the kids to astray and they got into trouble. So from that, we learned that he started associated with, you know, some rough people, and which may have led, maybe a reason may be associated to how it might have ended up is what we believe.

Steve Gregory

So when we come back from the break, I want to talk about some theories about the theories that you might believe are responsible for his death. We're talking about now Theodore Harvey, he disappeared my back and looks like apparently back in the 90s and his remains were discovered in 2008. Inside of a metal box on some private property near Devore, California, says here he was born March 21, 1965. His picture provided looks like by the family to the clay rendering from the anthropologist is similar.

You can see for yourself the clay model versus the actual photo just head over to KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved". More with Detective Art Alvarado but first, this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

#### **SEGMENT 4**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. If you've got a story idea or even a tip about a case, just grab your cell phone and dial #250 and say the keyword "unsolved". Just leave your name and contact information and a brief summary and someone from our team will get back to you. That's #250 keyword "unsolved". This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory.

We're talking with detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau and he's been assigned to some cold cases, we've been talking about this interesting one that he took in 2019, you took the case.

Detective Alvarado

2019-2020, when we start to spin up again.

Steve Gregory

But the case goes back to 2008. When Theodore Harvey's remains were found stuffed into a metal box off of a remote road in some private property near Devore. And before the break, we were talking about how they were able to figure out who he was, and put a name to those remains some interesting investigative techniques, some he's telling us about something you're not telling us about. And that's fine, because you still have to preserve those parts of the investigation. Because when you do find the person responsible or persons responsible, that's the kind of stuff that's gonna help you in court. Right?

Detective Alvarado

Xactly. I mean, we want to keep our evidence for the potential jury and have them decide this.

Steve Gregory

So in the meantime, we're trying to put information out there that might help jog some memories. We are talking about some time ago. But it's kind of amazing in your experience, detective that the memory is a funny thing.

Detective Alvarado

It is. And we're hoping with when we do all these investigative techniques, we're hoping just to generate leads. And as we get more information, we try to share that information with the public, in hopes that can help us with the case.

Steve Gregory

You talked a little bit about Harvey and what you learned about him, you said you criss crossed at least six states across the country. He comes from kind of a troubled past lost his mother at an early age. And you say that this might actually have contributed to his demise. So can you get into more detail about what you think his association with, I guess, bad elements, for lack of a better term? But what do you think were his downfalls in terms of his relationships?

Detective Alvarado

Well, he did hang out with that element people. And we knew sometimes when we go interview some of these people associated to these bad elements of a column, they're not very cooperative. And sometimes when we do interviews, as we, we saw, they weren't really forthcoming with all details, and as we start to see that as investigators that when we started to get hone in on your actual possible suspects, or at least a group of suspects, you know, they don't like to cooperate as much as we'd like them to.

Steve Gregory

So detective, you know, you were criss crossing the country, you said, and you were talking with known associates and possible persons of interest, maybe even suspects. What kinds of people were they? I mean, what were they into?

Detective Alvarado

these people were, they had, it seemed like these people just from talking to their own history, they had a rough life themselves, they let them come from broken homes, and a lot of them will get into drugs. But everybody we spoke to, they would describe they call him, they call him Teddy there and say Teddy even though he was had a rough, being a rough side to him, he was a generally nice guy. And and they had heard the rumors that he had been murdered, and possibly buried somewhere are different variations of that.

Steve Gregory

Was this without you telling them that or did they see it in the news?



Detective Alvarado

I don't know that we they would tell us on their own. We never volunteer information. We always when we interviewed people, we hope we hope to for them to give us their own version of whatever story they heard.

So that did that send up red flags?

It did set up red flags, but it's we knew we we knew that obviously he was in a box and we knew some people knew. So that's why the awful lot of these people just heard rumors is what we what we took rumors that this had happened to them. But they never just reported to law enforcement. Unfortunately, very specific rumor. Yes. With a lot of detail. Yes. And we and the thing is sometimes there's different types of rumors. So you know that some people it's secondhand information, because, you know, when they describe something they hear they describe it one way he was They did XY and Z to the Teddy. And he ended up here or they, you know, ABC and he ended up there. So we knew that the rumors were out there. And as we're getting closer to his inner circle, we're hoping to narrow down to specifics and that's our ultimate goal.

Steve Gregory

So and I know when you interview lots of different witnesses and or potential suspects or whatever, so if you have all of this and then was there a common theme or thread with all of these different interviews that kind of give you some more information?

Detective Alvarado

Yes, yes, there was.

Steve Gregory

Can you elaborate?

Detective Alvarado

The common theme is that he made up made him upset somebody and he ended up where it was and I can't get into specific who or what was possibly said there.

Steve Gregory

Okay. So when we come back, I want to talk about how all of this and how it gets to here because I am talking about maybe when he was spotted last or anything like that damning information like that.

That will that will be in the 1993

In 1983. Okay, coming up more with detective Art Alvarado from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and in the next hour the murder of Christopher Perez. It's a case from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. But first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

### **SEGMENT 5**

Steve Gregory

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We've been talking with Art Alvarado. He's a detective with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He's with the homicide division assigned to cold cases. And we've been talking about the death of Theodore Harvey. He was also known as Teddy. He was found in 2008, along a remote desert road and DeVore he was stuffed into a metal box. And he was fully clothed when he was stuffed in there. A forensic anthropologist was able to recreate his face through a clay rendering using just the skull. She put some hair on the bust, eyes, the whole nine yards, we have the picture KFIAM40.com. Then when the photo that was I guess provided by the family, I assume when we found them online, found it online. Okay, so they were able to find this photo. And when you look at the photos, you have to sort of open your mind a bit. But then you see some interesting similarities. And including the hair of the eyes, even the eyebrows. And you can see a side by side comparison. For the break detective. We were getting a little deeper into Teddy's background and a little bit of his known associates. I assume and based on my experience in detectives I've talked with for many, many years, that when you find people you want to talk to persons of interest or suspects or anything like that potential suspects. A lot of times they're afraid to cooperate.

Detective Alvarado

Yes, they are. People have very different reasons why they may or may not want to cooperate with law enforcement. Sometimes witnesses don't want to get involved because they're afraid just don't want to go to court. Or they may be afraid of what they saw and you still want to cooperate. Then you have obviously the people involved. They have other reasons. They don't want to cooperate with law

enforcement, which for reasons. Well, they know sometimes if they're involved in a crime or law enforcement, they may end up in jail in prison jail.

Steve Gregory

Now, you've already you've already kind of painted the picture that Teddy was associating with a lot of bad people, potential gang activity, potential criminal activity. Do you think any of that played a role in his death?

Detective Alvarado

That we don't know? We can only speculate at this point. Until we talk to people who lack of interest to him and at least helped. You know, put them in there and bury them. We won't know that answer. And that's what we're hoping, hoping that the photo will help us out that one witness we need just one witness who may feel bad and say maybe I wasn't maybe he or she wasn't directly saw what happened and we're hoping he or she can help us out.

Steve Gregory

Did you ever walk the scene?

Detective Alvarado

Yes, we did.

Steve Gregory

What did what did you see? Tell me what you saw.

Detective Alvarado

It's it's a pretty remote area itself. It's off the 15 freeway on the east side. It's there's mountain side, that's on the side there and it's very remote area

Steve Gregory

if there was a piece of that sticking up the corner of the box sticking up. How deep was the box buried?

Detective Alvarado

The box was it was at one point was was buried like 99% of it and as our witness explained, it slowly started... a corner started sticking up/

Steve Gregory

So the dirt was eroding over years because if they were driving over it then there was some sort of a road it was the remote road or path, right?

Detective Alvarado

It's all dirt area that's unimproved there's some structures out there but unimproved and and obviously there it rains and whatnot probably started exposing that corner.

Steve Gregory

Yeah, so years of erosion on there. Just probably walk down. Gosh, and I know I'm putting you in this position speculating a lot. But, you know, we are talking about some unknowns here. On a case like that, for better or worse, San Bernardino County is the largest acreage county in the country. You have some of the most remote parts of the country right here. A lot of people love to come out and bury their bodies in San Bernardino County, I can't, we're always covering cases where bodies show up in the dirt out here somewhere on something like this coming that close to the 15th. Does this look like that it may have happened quickly? Or was this methodical?

Detective Alvarado

Well, given, given the size of the box and understanding that, just keep it in mind that there was a human being in there. It would require a lot of digging, really, and I don't know how they would have dug that out. I don't know if they use machinery or just shovels. But yeah,

Steve Gregory

Because what kind of soil is that?

Detective Alvarado

It's, it's, it's relative compacted. But so that we don't know. That's one of the things that unknown, how did they dig up that hole to put that box in there? That's one of the unknowns I would like to know. And because that's how in frankly, some it can be suppose that is a some have been hired to with the backhoe and dig a hole in that area. And he doesn't know that he he or she has a contractor doesn't know that they're digging up a hole for somebody that involves a homicide a great that's that's this is

kind of things were asked for were witnesses, just hopefully these kinds of these kinds of information, put it out to public and help generate these leads.

Steve Gregory

So when you talk about that, it's interesting, because if you say the hole was big enough to where it could have been a backhoe or some professional equipment or industrial grade equipment, do you actually go that deep and look for people in the area that have backhoes? Or even rent back hoes or anything like that? That's a long time ago. But I mean, how do you look at that?

Detective Alvarado

In this case, obviously, we had what we had, so we didn't need any special equipment. So it's already dug up for the most part by the reporting party. But we as a county, we

Steve Gregory

I'm talking about to have dug the hole initially.

Detective Alvarado

Oh, for this poll to be done. Yeah. But in there. Yeah. I guess I'm just speculating here. Yeah. I don't know if these this type of element and people who did this would have hired a contractor it's unlikely, frankly, but, but that's the unknown. Yeah. And that's why we're hoping to generate leads here. So about three feet by two feet, approximately

Steve Gregory

three feet by two feet. And he was according to the stats, proximately, 5'6-5'9. Was that pretty accurate? That's pretty accurate, pretty accurate. The positioning of the remains are the skeletal remains the position of the body, how is it configured?

Detective Alvarado

And again, now I'm going to go back to specific evidence that we found on the scene and the position of the body that it won't get into because that's what we're going to hold. Okay, because the only people that really know that is the investigators. And the people involved in this case, was it unusual?

Steve Gregory

I mean, elder beyond the fact that a body was stuffed into a small box, but was it an unusual set situation?

Detective Alvarado

Well, it hasn't happened before people been putting in items. Yes, unfortunately, it's that happens but it was possible I mean, they were able to do it. And when we examined the crime scene, we were able to kind of determine what possibly happened to them at least initially.

Steve Gregory

And then you said early in the end the show that there was also evidence that he may have been buried alive

Detective Alvarado

by some kind of some of the evidence that we found kind of give us an indication that he possibly is buried alive, Yes.

Steve Gregory

Were there any holes in the box like drilled holes in it to where like to suffer or was it a sealed box?

Detective Alvarado

It's I'm not gonna get specific type of box but the only holes that we saw was after the fact that was created by the initial RP when he poked holes through the box.

Steve Gregory

RP meaning reporting party? So the was gonna say the box in and I don't want to promise anymore because I don't want to keep them a secret but is this a box I could buy on Amazon?

Detective Alvarado

No, actually, you have to understand the it's a metal box container with an access point to it. And it was weathered, so we couldn't really find it, but it was big enough to fit him in.

Steve Gregory

Okay, we're gonna wrap up this case when we come back more with Detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

## **SEGMENT 6**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. Coming up after the bottom of the hour we explore the case of Christopher Perez, a young man shot and killed in a park in the city of La Puente. No witnesses, no clues, no apparent motive. It's a case from the LA County Sheriff's Department. Download and subscribe to the unsolved with Steve Gregory podcast on the iHeartRadio app, Apple podcasts, Spotify or anywhere you get your podcasts. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved.

Welcome back, we've been talking with Detective Art Alvarado with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Division. He has been assigned to cold cases. And he's got one here that we've been talking about. That's, it seems to me, it comes right out of a Goodfellas, Reservoir Dogs, Godfather movie, it sounds like it was one of these sorts of cases where they wanted this person to suffer and die. We're talking about Theodore Harvey, who disappeared back in the '90s. His remains were found in 2008 along a remote desert road and Devore a forensic anthropologist did an amazing job. Reese constructing or reconstructing his face using only his skull, and then they obtained a picture and you can see the side by side comparison at KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved". Detective, we're just wrapping this up. You've already identified the fact that Mr. Harvey or Teddy as he was known, affiliated with some pretty bad people, possible gangs of criminal activity, you've kind of speculated that those affiliations and associations probably most likely led to his death. Ultimately, he was stuffed into this metal box he was found buried. This obviously was the kind of crime that was intentional targeted. What's left? What's next for you on this case?

Detective Alvarado

At this point, we're really reaching out to the public and hopefully to generate leads to tell us who was possibly involved in this case. And that's where we're at right now.

Steve Gregory

More than one person involved?

Detective Alvarado

More than likely, yes, that if you could imagine a metal box with a human being in it, it would very awkward thing to carry. So I would imagine at least one or two, at least two people had to have been able to manipulate that box.

Steve Gregory

Were you able to determine whether or not he was put in the box and then buried or was he put in the box on the scene?

Detective Alvarado

That we can't determine.

Steve Gregory

The fact that he was alive when he was put in the box potentially based on some stuff with does that lead you to believe one or the other?

Detective Alvarado

I'm just speculating the order how it happened. We just we believe it might have been placed in that box alive. We don't know where where that happened. And that's that's what kind of details we need to try to figure out.

Steve Gregory

Where was he living?

Detective Alvarado

He had ties to San Bernardino County, various various places. He he transitioned from one place to another,

Steve Gregory

But he lived in San Bernardino County?

Detective Alvarado

Yes.

Steve Gregory



So this was in the case where he was somebody did something somewhere else and brought him all the way here.

Detective Alvarado

Where happened, we don't know. Because as I mentioned, you know, somebody who kind of fortunately, things happen in other places, and people end up here, but we're speculating that he was in San Bernardino County at some point. And where this happened, we don't know. But we know where he ended up.

Steve Gregory

I'd like to ask this of all investigators in thinking of this case, and in what you've learned about it so far, and sort of what you're hoping for and expecting tell me something personal about this case or something professional that you've never said publicly before?

Detective Alvarado

Well, something we learned about him specifically that we have not released to anybody else's nickname nickname that we got from, from many of his associates his name, his nickname was "spooky". And I released that so people maybe people didn't know him as Theodore maybe then people don't with full name. But some people might remember my "spooky". So if you if, if that helps generate, you know, some recollection of something happened to spooky back in the early 90s. We're hoping that that would also help out here.

Steve Gregory

What do you want the public to know? What do you want them to do? And

Detective Alvarado

As far as the public would like them to know we, regardless of his childhood and when he got into every person deserves his nobody deserve what happened to Teddy, nobody. So regardless of what what was background, we will do everything in our capability to try to solve this case. And we're just reaching out to the public. Hopefully that can help us out with this case.

Steve Gregory

You think there are people out there that know what happened?

Detective Alvarado

Absolutely.

Steve Gregory

Do you think the killer/killers are still out there?

Detective Alvarado

I believe so. Yes.

Steve Gregory

Detective, I can't thank you enough for your time and good luck and keep us posted.

Detective Alvarado

Okay, thank you.

Steve Gregory

Learn more about this case, check out the claim model of "spooky" and review other cases by going to our website [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com) keyword "unsolved". Coming up, we head over to the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau in Monterey Park as we look at the murder of a young man in La Puente. But first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for news update.

### **SEGMENT 7**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is unsolved. Our next case Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department numbers 020122131422-011, The murder of Christopher Perez.

Lieutenant Guerrero

First of all, I want to thank the members of the media for being here today and assisting us in this investigation. Today we're seeking the public's

Steve Gregory

October 21 2021 1pm Bassett park in the city of La Puente. Lieutenant gives a background on the case

Lieutenant Guerrero

on December 11th 2020. Here at this park, just outside the restroom. Christopher was confronted by unknown individuals and was shot and killed during what we believe was a commission of a robbery. Christopher's family and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau are seeking the public's assistance in bringing these perpetrators to justice. Detectives are requesting any information that we could obtain from the public that would assist us in this investigation. A cash reward of \$15,000 has been secured. You could contact the LA County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau and if you wish to remain anonymous, you could contact the Crimestoppers hotline.

Christopher's Mother

SPEAKING SPANISH

Steve Gregory

Doesn't matter if you know Spanish or not nothing rips at your heart more than hearing the mother of a murdered child regardless of what language pleading with the killer or killers to turn themselves in order for someone to come forward with information. That was Norka Perez. Now Christopher's sister Angelica Perez.

Angelica Perez

It's hard to we're going through as a family. It's hard that they took my brother and he didn't deserve it. Because everybody who knew my brother loved him. Nobody hated him. I don't know why they did it. And I just wish that it would have gone her ended a different way. But he's gone and we're trying to set that and for anybody out there. Just put yourself in our shoes and know that just all this violence of this dumb violence, that's seems like it's never gonna end. It could happen to anybody. So if you have anything, the most minimal detail, it can help us and I know nothing's gonna bring him back. But at least we'll get justice for him. And he wasn't a bad person. He was young he was full of life. Everybody who knew him loved him everybody can imagine of a monster who would who would kill my brother, but you're out there and we're gonna get you. That's all we need to say. You're you're gonna be found.

Steve Gregory

I stopped by Homicide Bureau in Monterey Park to talk with detective Theo Baljet. Baljet offered more details about the case. Keep in mind we're in a conference room inside the homicide bureau. It's large, it's not studio quality. But you'll you'll get the point. We're talking about Christopher Perez, who was

killed on Friday, December 11 2020. Joining us now is Theo Baljet with the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau detective, what happened to Christopher Perez?

Detective Baljet

So what we know is at some point on December 11, 2020. He showed up at Bassett Park on Vineland Avenue in West Belinda, it was about 11:20 at night. And he ended up in the restroom area. There was a security guard who had done a lap around the location as he did every hour. The location was serving as a homeless shelter at the time. And he didn't notice anything out of the ordinary. And then at about 11:20, he heard gunshots there were some people seeing running from the area. And then Chris' body was discovered just outside the restroom at the park,

Steve Gregory

So let's talk about that. You said Bassett Park, the whole park was a homeless shelter?

Detective Baljet

So there's a large structure that was designed to be like a recreation center, a large building so the building itself was the main homeless shelter. There were a few people that would like overflow that were like staying outside the building on the sidewalk. And then there was a kids play structure that at the time, because of COVID, it was all shut down. And you know, there was no, no, no recreational activity was allowed on the structure. But there were people that had kind of turned it into their, their makeshift shelter at the time. So when did you get the case, we got the call that night. Shortly after we got there about two in the morning. And his body was still there, we look around for evidence, we found cartridge cases on the ground, we found some blood leading into the bathroom. That's how we know. altercation most likely started in the bathroom. There was a gold chain that belong to Chris that was broken. And that was on the ground. His wallet was not there. His car keys were not there. And we believe he had a watch that was also missing. So there was some type of robbery that occurred as well at the same time.

Steve Gregory

So when you say there was blood in inside the restroom, so it's your belief that something happened in the restroom and moved its way outside?

Detective Baljet

Correct.

Steve Gregory

So was Chris there with other friends or other people?

Detective Baljet

As far as we know, he went there alone. He was last seen that night by his girlfriend. Maybe about 30 minutes to an hour prior to what happened? And yeah, we don't know that he was with anybody.

Steve Gregory

So, you know, as a detective, you're probably asking yourself as I'm asking myself, what's a 23 year old guy doing the park by himself at 11:20 at night.

Detective Baljet

You know, we do have information that he he was possibly using our or selling drugs. We don't know that that's what he was doing that night. But it's it's definitely a possibility.

Steve Gregory

Is that park known for any kind of activity like that?

Detective Baljet

You know, that? Not that I'm aware of. At the time, like it was kind of a weird time because of the COVID and the homeless shelter being there. It wasn't really like the normal activities of the park going on, because it wasn't being used as a park it was being used as a homeless shelter. So you know, the, the I don't know what the trends were in the area. I mean, I'm sure there was some narcotics activity going on there. But I don't know that this was specifically related to.

Steve Gregory

So then let's, let's branch out a little bit further. How about that area of town that that neighborhood or town? Does it have a reputation for one thing or another?

Detective Baljet

You know, the area around is more like there's a some apartments next toward next next door next door I'm sorry, that are you know, fairly seem fairly nice residential area and then within that it's a lot of

commercial property. So it didn't seem like there's a lot of a lot of stuff going on, especially at night in that area.

Steve Gregory

Then did you know whether or not your department or other law enforcement wherever called they're frequently in that area?

Detective Baljet

know, at the time, they weren't getting calls, they're, you know, you know, for disturbances I know there was at least one other shooting at the park, you know, around that same timeframe. But, you know, we don't know You know, what, what they were involved at this point.

Steve Gregory

To learn more about this case, and others go to KFIAM640.com keyword "unsolved", and if you have a tip or story idea, grab your cell phone and dial #250 and say the keyword "unsolved", more on the murder of Christopher Perez. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.

### **SEGMENT 8**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app? I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved.

Detective before the break, we were talking about the circumstances of finding Chris Perez shot and killed at Bassett Park. Tell us a little bit about Chris, what was he like? What do you know about him?

Detective Baljet

So from talking to his friends and family, he was an energetic young man, he's always had a smile on his face. You know, everybody said he was friendly to everyone he knew he didn't really have any enemies. He would, you know, if somebody he knew somebody in need, he would do his best to provide for them. And I, we haven't found anybody that said anything bad about him. You know, he's just seemed like a good young kid. And yeah, I mean, he. Like I said before, he did have the, you know, some information that he may have been using and or selling drugs. But, you know, as far as like, anything mean spirited or anything, any type of enemies or anything like that we don't have any type of information like that.

Steve Gregory

Um, you know, the thing that you see we have some information he may or may not have. So how far or how deep Are you going in the drug connection?

Detective Baljet

I mean, we're looking at every angle.

Steve Gregory

Have you found any evidence to support any that?

Detective Baljet

I mean, I'm not gonna get into exactly what evidence we have, you know, on that end, there is a chance like, you know, we're we're looking at, you know, his phone records and, and we do have his phone. So, you know, we're looking at, you know, people that

You know, because things happen so fast. So you know, if that's assuming it was a robbery, which it does look like it was, you know, they may not have had time to grab everything, they just grab what they could and then they take off running. And I forgot to mention before his car was there as well. So that's why we assume that he would have had car keys on him.

Steve Gregory

So because I was going to ask if the car keys were missing if his car ended up being stolen?

Detective Baljet

No, it was there it was there a parking lot.

Steve Gregory

So did he was the watch behind watch.

Detective Baljet

I don't recall the exact model of it. But I think from quoting the family it was it wasn't it was something that he had had saved up for and was one of his prized possessions.

Steve Gregory

I'm sure that you know, that you probably go on this whole pawnshop route or whatever. Do Is it your experience that they usually sell that stuff off? Or do they do they steal it to keep themselves what's your experience?

Detective Baljet

There's I wouldn't say there was any trend one way or another it's it could be anything they sell it on the street for cash or trade it for drugs or or you know they could bring to a pawn shop but you know, sometimes when when something goes bad, they just throw it in the trash because they don't want to be associated with it. They're worried about getting caught. Yeah. Even though they went through all the effort of doing that and then they end up tossing it in Yeah, well, you know, most most robberies the intention isn't to kill the person is to take their their property. So if it ends up ends up going bad where the person gets killed, you know, that obviously that ratchets up the culpability of the suspect. So they don't you know, that makes them more wary of of disposing of the evidence, you know, as opposed to just a robbery where everything goes as planned and they are able to get away with it.

Steve Gregory

So he was with his girlfriend 30 minutes prior to being shot out far or how close to the live to the park?

Detective Baljet

Fairly close, maybe within a 10 mile five to 10 mile radius.

Steve Gregory

So you know, when I asked you earlier about what is a 23 year old doing it a park almost 11:30 at night. It was was the park on his way home, it's an off the beaten path.

Detective Baljet

It's a little off the beaten path. So you know, we we assume he was there for for a reason where he is and

Steve Gregory

that was a destination was a stop?



Detective Baljet

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So what does that tell you?

Detective Baljet

I mean, yeah, we're leaning towards he was meeting somebody that you know, for whatever reason, for whatever reason. I mean, there's chance that he could just stop use a restroom, but, you know, it's more than likely he was meeting somebody, maybe even somebody set them up and wanted him there and lured in there. So we're looking at everything.

Steve Gregory

So you don't believe this was random?

Detective Baljet

It doesn't. It doesn't appear that way. I wouldn't rule it out completely. But, you know, there's also a chance, you know, of a gang like, you know, a gang initiation or something like that, where, where maybe some gangsters are hanging out there at the park and just waiting for somebody to show up and, and, you know, one of the younger gang members wants to prove his, his mettle, you know, and do something, you know, that helps them gain status in the game.

Steve Gregory

The families, you know, it's been my experience, at least covering cases like this over the years, families are always the last to know about a person. They seem to be the in the worst denial of all, or in the dark the most. Was there any and I'm not trying to besmirch, you know, Chris's legacy. And I don't want to certainly taint his reputation. I just, I'm trying to figure out, get my head around whether or not the family was aware of you think of Chris's extracurricular activities, you know, because families always portray their loved ones as perfect angels. Right. And it sounds like that Chris May had been in a situation where he may not been that perfect angel. But he certainly didn't deserve to be gunned down.

Detective Baljet

Yeah. I mean, nobody's a perfect angel. And the level of knowledge of his of his actual activities, probably varies by family member, maybe his parents had less of an idea. Maybe his, you know, siblings and a girlfriend maybe knew a little bit more. But, you know, we don't really, that doesn't really guide us as far as like, solving the case, we approach every case. Like we want to do our best we fight for the victim. It doesn't matter if they were homeless, gang member, drug dealer, we our job is to fight for the victim to speak for the victim and and bring justice for them.

Steve Gregory

So there's a \$15,000 reward on this case. Yes. And that's for the arresting conviction. Correct. Okay. So you're hopeful that'll jar some memories? Shake some trees?

Detective Baljet

Yes. I mean, we know there were people there even some homeless that were sitting outside that told us they didn't see anything, but we hear second and third hand information that they probably did see somebody and maybe were afraid to come forward and talk to us.

Steve Gregory

Very good detective, thank you for your help. Appreciate your time, and good luck. Thanks. Well, that's gonna do it. For more on this and other cases, go to our web page at [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com) keyword "unsolved". And don't forget to download and subscribe to our podcast on the iHeartRadio app. Unsolved with Steve Gregory is a production of the KFI News Department for iHeartMedia Los Angeles. Robin Bertolucci, program director Chris Little, news director, the programs produced by Steve Gregory and Jacob Gonzalez. The digital producer is Andro Mammo. The field engineer is Tony Sorrentino. Coming up next it's Coast to Coast but first this is KFI AM 640. Time now for a news update.