

## UNSOLVED WITH STEVE GREGORY, EPISODE 101

### 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 whiskey Gregory.

In this episode, the murder of Jesse Avalos LA County Sheriff's case 014800240284011 The murder of Eduardo Robles, LA County Sheriff's case 015093320283011 and the murder of Amanda Nikki Lopez LA County Sheriff case 01861060282011.

In July of 2021, I got a call from my friend and colleague Oswaldo Borraez. He's with Univision KMEX channel 34 here in Los Angeles. He told me about a case he was tipped off on it was a strange one where three people had been killed over a four year period from 2014 to 2018. But now detectives with the LA County Sheriff's Department figured the murders were probably done by the same person with an accomplice. So I reached out to Captain Joe Mendoza. He's the head of the department's Homicide Bureau. And I asked him if I could get in on the action, meaning I'd like to do some coverage. I want to be in the loop for any developments. Captain Mendoza referred me to Ray Lugo, one of the detectives running the case. Lugo agreed to meet Oswaldo and I at the scene of one of the murders near Commerce. Keep in mind, these are preliminary interviews. So details may differ from the final outcome. And these are exclusive interviews and if not aired before in their entirety. But I wanted to give you a peek behind the scenes how we actually work to put this story together. You're also going to hear the voice of my friend and colleague Oswaldo, the raw audio as we call it will be different volume levels. You'll hear a lot of background noise and some of those we interviewed wore masks the whole time. But I wanted to bring you into my world as much as possible. I think it's an interesting world. I also want to caution you some of the details may be too graphic for some

Detective Ray Lugo

Detective Ray Lugo, LA County Sheriff's homicide. Okay. Back on February the 10th 2014. Victim Jesse Avalos received a telephone call at about 10:50 in the evening, at night, where a friend asked him for a

battery jump and that his friend said that he was near the his car was stuck near the intersection of Telegraph Road and Arizona Avenue. At about on the following morning on February the 11th 2014. At approximately 03 100 hours. East LA sheriff's station received a 911 call that they had found a individual sitting in a blue SUV parked on the wrong side of the street with the hood up. When deputies arrived and detectives arrived. They found the victim Jesse Avalos still sitting in his driver's seat with the his seatbelt on and the hood of his car. up the hood of his truck, blue truck. Right across the street from the Santa Ana freeway, the 5 freeway

Steve Gregory

and this is a mix of residential and industrial. So

Detective Ray Lugo

if you're parked on Telegraph Road, that's all commercial industrial area. And once you go north, for instance here on federal, this is a residential area.

Steve Gregory

So when did you know that his murder was tied to the others we're talking about?

Detective Ray Lugo

We found out said several months ago that the murders were related and that we tied them up all by ballistic evidence,

Steve Gregory

and what was his particular role? I mean, what was the motive behind his particular death?

Detective Ray Lugo

At this time, we don't know.

Steve Gregory

Was there any video or any surveillance video that helps you at all in this particular crime?

Detective Ray Lugo

We don't want to say at this time.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so, but you are convinced that this death is tied to the others involved in the same suspect?

Detective Ray Lugo

Yes, both suspects are involved with all three murders.

Steve Gregory

At this point, Avalos' sister Maria arrives and spoke to us briefly about what it's been like for her and her family,

Maria Avalos

we miss him, we miss him so much. His kids miss him. I can't even explain to you the pain that this this still causes my mother and my father. We've never had justice served. And we feel that everybody deserves that, you know, at least we know that it's not going to bring them back. But at least we'll get some closure.

Steve Gregory

Little did Maria know, she actually drove by the scene of her brother's death, just hours after it happened.

Maria Avalos

I actually passed by the street on Telegraph, going to my job. And I saw the tape, but I never realized there was my brother. I arrived to work. And about two or three hours later, my eldest daughter called me, she was at that point at that time staying with my mom. And so that detectives went to my mother's house and let her know that my brother was found and he was assassinated and that she called me at work, and I was devastated. I thought it was a bad dream. And I wish that that something had went wrong that that perhaps it would be a different person.

Steve Gregory

She said she prayed every night to give not only her brother some peace but also her parents who said goodbye to Maria and wished her family well, and as she leaves detective Lugo walks back over, he wanted to tell us about the second murder, which happened very close by.

Detective Ray Lugo

on July 6 2015. Victim at Robles was near the intersection of Eagle Street and Humphries Avenue in East LA when he was involved in a fight with another individual. The individual after the fight, the individual jumps over the wrought iron fence and walks over to victim Eddie Robles' GMC SUV and punctures the tires, the suspect and the other. Both suspects left the location returned approximately five minutes later and shot the victim at Robles numerous times in the upper torso. After shooting the victim the suspect entered a green, light green vehicle and the suspect vehicle was last seen driving eastbound on Eagle Street and out of view.

Steve Gregory

When we come back we'll head over to the East LA courthouse. It's the scene of the third murder. 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

Welcome back to Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. Before the break, we reviewed two of three murders, which happened from 2014 to 2018. In the area of East LA, we've been talking with detective Ray Lugo from the LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau. Now he's going to give us a rundown of the third murders. Lugo met me and fellow reporter Oswaldo Borraez at the East LA courthouse.

Detective Ray Lugo

Deputies from East LA Sheriff's Station received a phone call around 0240 hours in the morning of person that had been shot near the offices of supervisor Hilda Solis. Deputies responded and found the victim in a yellow tent. Shot in the upper torso right around this area. Right under this underneath this canopy. We have information that the suspects drove up Eastbound on Civic Center Drive, just north of us, just north of the East LA courthouse. The right from passenger exited he was wearing a ski mask a dark or black colored ski mask and dark clothing. The suspect walked in a southerly direction. Checking tents, appeared to be checking tents. As he walked past the plaza in front of the courthouse to the location where the front door of Hilda Solis supervisor field office. He came to area which had a yellow tent. He opened the tent, stuck a firearm in the tent and fired one round. The suspect walked in a westerly direction and then in a southerly direction and entered a silver colored PT Cruiser on the right foot and passenger side. suspect vehicle the PT Cruiser drove turned right federally here and made a

right on Third Street and was last seen traveling westbound on Third Street and not a view. The suspect is described he was approximately five, eight to five, nine 185 pounds and wearing dark clothing is all we have. We have information from witnesses that the driver appeared to be a little older. He was described as a male Hispanic, approximately 5'9 or so heavyset, possibly possibly had a mustache. That's what we were told. The suspects are extremely dangerous. We're hoping for the public's help. We have a thanks to supervisor Hilda Solis, we received a \$80,000 reward for information wanted in connection with all three of these murders. We believe they are all related and we believe the killers are serial killers and could strike again.

Steve Gregory

You were talking about person came up and was looking intent. So it's a serial killer. But were these targeted attacks?

Detective Ray Lugo

Yes, they appeared to be.

Steve Gregory

Can you elaborate at all about that?

Detective Ray Lugo

We believe that the victims knew the suspect is all we can say at this point.

Steve Gregory

Now you got you say you were able to get a description of the shooter and how were you able to get that description.

Detective Ray Lugo

There was numerous witnesses though there was an encampment located in front of the stellate courthouse, there was approximately 20 to 25 people living in the encampment. They were homeless people they most of them know each other. Most of them knew the victim, Amanda Nicole Lopez, and they initially were cooperating with investigators. But suddenly they decided to change their mind and then decided not to cooperate with with the investigation.

Steve Gregory

Is there a reason why you think do you think that they were scared or intimidated?

Detective Ray Lugo

I believe they were, we were told they were approached and intimidated by the suspect, by the suspect and family members.

Steve Gregory

So you're looking at? I mean, there's the shooter, and then you see the driver of the car, but this can have a bigger footprint than initially thought.

Detective Ray Lugo

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So you have a serial killer, that might be supported by the killer's family?

Detective Ray Lugo

Possibly, yes. Family and possibly friends.

Oswaldo

Now, for those people who may not be aware of the law, to even be a part of this, or to have knowledge of this makes you as much of a criminal as the person who committed So what do you want to say to that?

Detective Ray Lugo

You if you continued, I want to say this to the public, there's no reason to be afraid anymore. We can't let continue to let people get away with murder. And if you want to be involved, with the murderer, or a serial killer, you will be prosecuted also.

Steve Gregory

based on obviously information, you know, that we don't do you think that this person's done? Or do you think this person is going to keep going?

Detective Ray Lugo

We believe that he may been involved in a possibly another murder. And we do believe that if we don't catch him, that he will continue to kill people.

Steve Gregory

Detective, what is the common theme here in in the victims? Is there a common theme at all that you can talk about?

Detective Ray Lugo

We believe that the victims all knew the suspect.

Steve Gregory

in some way or another romantically or otherwise,

Detective Ray Lugo

possibly.

Oswaldo

But what about the ballistics because I am sure that that has those that have any relation, I mean, any of the ballistic analysis and forensics that you have done have yielded the fact that it was the same weapon, the same type of caliber, etc.

Detective Ray Lugo

We're not going to talk about ballistic evidence and

Steve Gregory

come to it but you're comfortable enough, obviously, that the person that you're looking for is the same one that's tied to most all of these or all of them.

Detective Ray Lugo

I'm extremely confident.

Steve Gregory

The mother of Amanda Lopez shows up while we're talking with detectives. We'll listen to her comments next. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time 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 go over to [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com) and type in the keyword "unsolved".

Just wrapped up an interview with Ray Lugo He's a detective with the LA County Sheriff's Department. And as we're finishing up a woman approaches us Lugo introduces her as the mother of Nikki Lopez, the third victim of the East LA murder spree.

Oswaldo

if I may ask you your full name.

Rosa Lopez

Rosa Lopez

Oswaldo

What was the name of your daughter and her age?

Rosa Lopez

Amanda Nicole Lopez. At the time of her death, she was 27

Steve Gregory

Rosa has a mask on and that's why it sounds muffled.



Rosa Lopez

My daughter was a very fun loving person. She loved her son. She was a mother. She loved her family, her friends. She was just all around good girl.

Oswaldo

So take us through the day. How did you find out what happened to your daughter?

Rosa Lopez

A friend of hers had called me. I was also friends with her. She grew up in our family and told me what had happened. And I needed confirmation. So my sister called the East LA Sheriff's Department Homicide Division. And they send two detectives over to confirm that it was my daughter.

Oswaldo

So what did they say happened?

Rosa Lopez

Just that she was shot.

Steve Gregory

Is there any idea at all as to? I mean, did you think that she was targeted? Did you think this was random? Did you have any idea why someone might have wanted to hurt her?

Rosa Lopez

I had no idea whatsoever. She wasn't in trouble. I mean, I had no idea why anybody would want to do this.

Steve Gregory

What were detectives able to tell you at all about the case? And what were they able to tell you about how things are moving?

Rosa Lopez

Um, not much just what had happened. And they were going to work on it. We just had the three year anniversary of her passing. So really not much on that front.

Oswaldo

Now, when we just arrived here, I couldn't help I noticing your pain. I mean, this is an incredibly difficult situation for you particularly because we're standing, which she was sadly murdered.

Rosa Lopez

Yeah, very hard. Every time I come to this spot, it's extremely hard. It's a pain that no parent should have to go through.

Oswaldo

Somebody out there knows somebody out there may be watching what you're saying here, what do you want to say to the killer to the person who was driving that vehicle to anybody who may be withholding information that is needed now to get some justice for you and your family?

Rosa Lopez

In case anyone who has any information? Can they please come forward? In contact the East LA Sheriff's Department homicide division. We know that there were people there at that time. Why are not coming forward? We don't know. So please, if you have any information, this please come forward.

Steve Gregory

Why was she here? What was going through her life? And how are things with her that she was here?

Rosa Lopez

She became homeless. So that's how she ended up here.

Steve Gregory

Had you been in touch with her on a regular basis?

Rosa Lopez

The last two weeks before she passed? No. I had not spoken.

Oswaldo

So her son you mentioned that she has a son. Yeah. Tell us about him. How's he coping? Is he aware of what happened?

Rosa Lopez

I don't know if he's aware. His father has cut off all contact with my side of the family. So I haven't seen my grandson over four years.

Oswaldo

Is there anything else that you want to tell us about her anything that perhaps would trigger some sort of reaction in our community that somebody may know or have a any do anything?

Rosa Lopez

Amanda grew up in this area in East LA. She was known as Nikki to her friends and all around the area. She's known as Nikki. That's a nickname she gave herself and she just, you know, loved the area and he's always lived here.

Oswaldo

Is there anything else that you would like to add? We haven't asked you that you would want to say

Rosa Lopez

Just that my daughter was a good person. And whoever is responsible for this needs to be brought to justice. She didn't deserve to die this way. This why, why? They felt that they needed to be judged jury and executioner and take my daughter's life. What could you shoot? What could she have done? It was so wrong. She didn't deserve to die this way.

Steve Gregory

Well, that's sort of a rough background on each of the murders and you heard detective Lugo offer up a vague motive. Now keep in mind he can't reveal all of his intel doing so could jeopardize the case. But

Lugo and his team and they've got some tricks up their sleeves. For that we head to the Hall of Justice in Downtown LA the headquarters are the Sheriff's Department. It's the morning of August 18, 2021.

Announcer

It is now my pleasure to introduce the captain of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau, Joe Mendoza.

Captain Joe Mendoza

Hello, good morning. Thank you for being out here with us today.

Steve Gregory

Now some of this we've already heard by Detective Lugo but I couldn't air all of what he told us yet. Now you'll hear Captain Mendoza revealed just a little bit more.

Captain Joe Mendoza

This is the murder of Jessie Avalos who was murdered on Monday, February 10 2014. At approximately 325 in the morning, he was seat belted in his vehicle in the driver's seat of his blue SUV and the hood of the vehicle was open. Deputies observe Avalos has sustained numerous gunshot wounds to his body. During this time, the vehicle that the vehicle was parked in front the location. Two suspects were seen around the vehicle and quickly left that location. Second murder. This is a murder of Eduardo Robles, who was murdered on Monday, July 6 2015. At 7:29pm. Victim Robles was involved in a physical altercation with the suspect in the driveway of a residence. The suspect then fled the location. And about five minutes later, the suspect returned to that driveway area shot victim Robles numerous times in the upper torso. Our third murder. This is a murder of Amanda Nikki Lopez, who was murdered on Sunday April 22nd 2018. At approximately 2:40am. Early that morning, a silver PT Cruiser drove into the civic center way near East Los Angeles courthouse as he exited the passenger side of the vehicle and began searching for Nikki in the homeless encampment, the suspect, ultimately located Nikki in a tent the suspect place a firearm into the tent while Nikki was sleeping and fired once striking her in the upper torso resulting in her death.

Steve Gregory

Coming up. Captain Mendoza gives a description in sketch of the shooter and his accomplice. This would play into some of those tricks I was telling you about earlier. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

#### **SEGMENT 4**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. If you've got a story, idea or even a tip about a case you're hearing about, grab your cell phone and dial #250 and just say the keyword "unsolved". Just leave your name, contact information, a brief summary of your tip or story. That's #250, keyword "unsolved". We've been listening to the actual press conference from August 18, 2021 at LA County Sheriff's Headquarters in Downtown LA. Homicide Bureau Captain Joe Mendoza has been giving an overview of the three murders, he says were done by the same guy with an accomplice.

Captain Joe Mendoza

We were able to get a good description of the first suspect. And he was described as a male Hispanic in his late 20s, with short hair, 5 foot 8 inches tall, with a medium build witnesses and video surveillance also allowed us to get a good description of the second suspect who is the driver of the vehicle in the second and third murders which occurred in 2015 and 2018. He's described as a male Hispanic in his mid to late 40s 5'8-5'9, heavysset with a possible mustache.

Steve Gregory

Remember when we heard from Jesse Avalos' sister Maria from near the scene of her brother's murder, while she and another sister were at this press conference.

Maria Avalos

as this old eldest sister of her sues Jesse Abalos. I just want to tell the community that or anyone in LA County who has information regarding these crimes to please come forward? I think I speak for my family as well as the the other two families that we don't have closure. We don't have justice. And I'm sure all of these families are still suffering. Please help us please come forward with any information you may have. Thank you.

Captain Joe Mendoza

I'd like to introduce Bertha Avalos. She's also a family member and sister of Jesse Avalos.

Bertha Avalos

Thank you for being here, I just want to reiterate what my sister stated. And please come forward. If you guys have any information about these murders. Her brother is truly missed by our family by his children. And I know that this is not going to bring him back. But it will bring us some sort of closure in

this devastating murder that happened to him and the rest of the victims. So I plead that you please reach out if you guys have any sort of information that will help solve these crimes. Thank you very much.

Captain Joe Mendoza

I will now take any questions.

Steve Gregory

Now it's time for the question and answer session. And I get in the first question connection between these three murders. Is there a common theme here?

Captain Joe Mendoza

Well, I can't speak to the motor until I think we bring the suspects to justice. But what I can see is that they are all connected in some way through the community. We believe they were known to the suspects. However, we're not too clear on what that connection was.

So they were targeted?

They were targeted based on the relationships with the suspects.

Steve Gregory

Is it possible because this pair could be responsible for other murders?

Captain Joe Mendoza

Yes, anything's possible. At this point, we're able to make three connections. And those are right now what we're focusing on. But of course, we always leave all our investigative options open and see if there's any other leads to any other murders.

Steve Gregory

I noticed that the date on the sketches is in May. Is there a reason why it took so long to release the sketches?

Captain Joe Mendoza

Yes, we were trying to put together all of the information to make sure that we were prepared to share this information with the public as accurately as we could.

Reporter

Thank you, sir. You have to be on the ballistics evidence anything else that we think these people these victims heard as to why they might have been assaulted and targeted?

Captain Joe Mendoza

We do not know at this time. We do believe that there is a connection as far as they knew each other there were specifically targeted, but the exact reasons so we don't have that information at this time.

Reporter

For any indication these guys. I need to say they're a hit team. They're going up, they'll take a contract, they'll go ahead and go somebody for whatever reason, emotional money, whatever it might be.

Captain Joe Mendoza

We don't have any information leading us to believe that at this time,

Reporter

After so many years, seven years, six years, three years on this, what led to the point They're saying, wait a minute, hold it, this is the same shooters.

Captain Joe Mendoza

One of the things that's unique about LA County Sheriff's Homicide Bureau is that we're centralized. And we commonly speak to other investigators about our cases. So when investigators were comparing notes on cases, then they believe that they have similar descriptions of the suspects. And that's when they really started to connect the dots.

Reporter

So after the description, what was the next link in this like the link was

Captain Joe Mendoza

the descriptions that all says both both of the suspects were similarly described. And also there was a between the 2014 and the 2015 murders when we collected ballistics and compare them, it was the same weapon that was used in those murders. And that was the the reasons that now we're coming forward, we have the information. We have the cooperation from all of the supervisors office that came forward the \$80,000. And now we are looking for witnesses, somebody that can help us to bring that piece of the puzzle that we're missing and bring closure to these families

Reporter

Any DNA evidence on any of these victims at all. Were the killers close enough to where something was there?

Captain Joe Mendoza

That is something that every single case, we did do DNA, we process all the DNA, but at this time, we're not going to share that. It's part of the investigation that we are not sharing

Steve Gregory

Now as a reporter the key takeaways from this press conference or the video, the PT Cruiser and a sketch of the two men. And remember when detective Lugo told me he believed the two suspects could be related. Well Lugo had already confirmed to me weeks prior that the two men were father and son, but I was asked not to reveal that in other details. Now, this is important to building trust with detectives, which also helps my access to the backstory of cases like this one, that trust would pay off in a big way. And we'll get to more on that later. Well, there you go. It's out in the open a sketch of the two men more details about the murders and pleas from family members. And how does all of this help? I'll tell you coming up, including how I found out about the ID and pending arrest of the father and son and how I was the only reporter on scene when the two were handcuffed. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

## **SEGMENT 5**

Steve Gregory

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

To see exclusive pictures video in the sketches provided by the LA County Sheriff's Department, head over to [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com), keyword "unsolved". We've also got a transcript of this episode. Also, if you



want to contact the team, just email us [unsolved@iheartmedia.com](mailto:unsolved@iheartmedia.com) And don't forget, you have a story idea or tip on your cell phone it's #250 keyword "unsolved".

Before the break, I let you in on some exclusive behind the scenes interviews on a press conference announcing descriptions of the two men connected with the murders of three people in the East LA area over a four year period. The press conference was on August 18 2021. And earlier that morning, I was able to use some of that audio you heard in the last hour to break the story of the three murders being connected along with a sketch we were able to get it on hours before anybody else.

KFI AUDIO

It's KFI AM 640, live everywhere on the IHeart Radio app. LA County Sheriff's detectives say an \$80,000 reward has been offered to find two men connected with three deaths in East LA - investigators say one man was killed in 2014, another man in 2015 and a homeless woman in 2018. Is there a common theme at all that you can talk about?

Steve Gregory

We believe that the victims all knew the suspect. in some way or another romantically or otherwise. Possibly detective Ray Lugo says one guy is the shooter the other may have driven the shooter around in a silver PT Cruiser

Detective Ray Lugo

Male Hispanic proximately five, eight to five, nine 185 pounds and wearing dark clothing the driver a little older. He was described as a male Hispanic, approximately 5'9 or so heavysset, possibly had a moustache.

Steve Gregory

Lugo says the shooter and the driver are most likely getting support from family members and our friends. Do you think that this person's done or do you think this person is going to keep going?

Detective Ray Lugo

We believe that he may been involved in the possibly another murder and we do believe that if we don't catch him, that he will continue to kill people.

Steve Gregory

Lugo says they've been able to put a composite sketch of them in together. You can see the sketch on our website at [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com), Steve Gregory KFI NEWS. Within a few hours of our story on KSI both on air and online and the press conference. I was told phones at the sheriff's department's Homicide Bureau blew up in fact, something unusual happened. Detective Ray Lugo told me among the first few calls were some of the strongest leads they had. And when they put the sketch on an electronic billboard in front of the Citadel Outlet stores in Commerce, even more solid leads came in a few days past and everything seemed pretty quiet. Up to the press conference, I was getting pretty regular updates from the detectives and it seemed things were moving at a pretty fast pace, then all of a sudden, everything went quiet, no calls, no texts, and I wasn't going to bother anybody. They certainly had more important things to do than keep me posted. And besides, it's not like there's not a lot of other news going on in the area. But then a few weeks later, completely out of the blue detective Ray Lugo calls, he says, Steve, we know who they are. We know where they live, and we're putting a surveillance team on him. I was like, wow, that was fast. And that's when Lugo told me about all the great tips and leads that were coming in. In fact, some of them led Lugo and his team out of town and out of state, Lugo told me sit tight, wait for his call. Well, of course, I was pushing him for more details. He told me a little bit more, and I knew he knew a lot more, but I was still sworn to secrecy. So I moved on to some other stories, including a heart wrenching cold case out of El Monte, which involves the death of a 14 year old girl who was an innocent victim of a gang hit. And more than 20 years later, detectives would get the evidence they needed to put the pieces together. And it all happened by accident. So I'll have that story coming up in a future episode.

I was stuck in traffic one morning sitting in my news truck on the 405 when the phone rang. Caller ID said Ray Lugo, my heart rate jumped up. I was almost too nervous to answer. Then I heard the voice it was Lugo. He says, Steve, it set we're moving in on September 23 at 0430 hours. details later gotta run Oh, and you get to go, see you later. Click. I shouted. BLEEP BLEEP BLEEP, took a deep breath and called my boss I have to keep him in the loop for liability reasons but I don't have to tell him everything. So it would appear the trap was set. Now here's the clincher. I got the call on September 8, that shows you how far in advance they have to work the takedown and it's a lot of coordination. We're going to use deputies from the East LA station for perimeter security and the arrest itself, the SWAT team from the department's Special Enforcement Bureau for entry into the house. Other detectives would be on scene to assist. There's the DHS office of forensics team, a canine unit that specializes in electronics, a lot of coordination. And I was the only reporter in LA with this intel. That's a lot of trust from the Homicide Bureau. This is right here with faces. Oh, yes. He's, yeah, well, the day finally arrived Thursday, September 23 3:30am. I arrived at the sSheriff's Special Enforcement Bureau staging area and after a short briefing, I take my truck and fall in line with a convoy the location is only a couple miles from the SWAT teams headquarters. It's still dark, turn off our headlights. I'm behind some sheriff's SUVs, which are behind the massive SWAT vehicles. In fact, you see all the SWAT guys hanging on the outside of the truck, weapons in tow. They're all holding onto the rails. They're all decked out. We arrived a few houses down from the target. I'm told to stay back until the SWAT teams entered the house and it's safe to approach I was allowed to put a microphone on one of the deputies who was allowed into the hot zone.

Detective On Scene

We are live. It's gonna be recording the whole time.

Steve Gregory

The best way for you to get a sense of that morning is to let you listen to the actual news feature I filed from the scene for KFI News. Now this is a portion of my report that aired the next morning.

After a quick briefing I followed in behind a convoy of SWAT vehicles and SUVs to the east LA then I got into position, the primary as a call it was 31 year old Anthony Velasquez the man investigators they shot and killed all three people , deputies pat him down before placing them into a van.

Detective On Scene

anything illegal on you? No, no. No, no needles. No. You're on parole probation. No. We're gonna make sure you have nothing illegal on you, Okay.

Steve Gregory

Moments later they arrest Velasquez's 51 year old father man well investigators say man well not only covered up for his son but in at least two of the murders he drove his son Anthony to and from the crime scenes the father is placed into the back of the band behind his son

Detective On Scene

making contact with you. These things look like they may have been finished, that are in a room.

Steve Gregory

The SWAT team discovers another man and woman staying in the house it ends up being the sister of Anthony Velasquez and the sister's boyfriend. Detectives told me they didn't think the couple had any knowledge about the actions of the Father and Son. As you heard the two were put into a van and when the son was put in the van I was able to snap a shot of him sitting down. Let's just say he gave me quite a facial expression. You can go to our web page to see it or our social media @unsolvedkfi. Coming up, I'll explain some of the interesting ways detectives were able to get the men into custody as Unsolved continues. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

## **SEGMENT 6**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory, and this is Unsolved. We're in East LA the 300 block of Humphries Avenue, it is the home of two men who've been arrested in connection with three murders from 2014 to 2018. The two were put into a van where they sat for about 45 minutes and come to find out that's intentional. Let's just say it's a tactic that sometimes yields great Intel. And while they sit in, ponder their future detectives were inside the house searching for clues and evidence. By now the neighborhood was waking up, people were gathered in their front yards curious about all the deputies and detectives. One of the neighbors approached me asked me what was going on when I told her she was shocked and relieved.

Neighbor

And I swear to God, God, I swear to God, the the cops pass by, and we're sending pictures to each house. The word the police. Yeah, there was leaving papers in each house here with the flyers with the schedule. Yeah. And I swear to God, a stack of Bibles. I want to lie to you. I told my tenant a car. There's not too many cars like that.

The PT Cruiser. Yeah. A lot of the neighbors were afraid of these guys.

Yeah. Couldn't even look at them. Oh, my God.

Steve Gregory

No, but they're sitting right there in that van.

Neighbor

This white one?

Steve Gregory

Yeah.

Neighbor

Yeah, it's true. We were all afraid. It's true.

Steve Gregory

Really?

Neighbor

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

Why?

Neighbor

Threatening, very threatening, very threatening. When there was an accident here in the neighborhood. They jumped, they came out of that house. And they got they got a knife, and they punctured the tires of the car that hit other cars here in the neighborhood. And the guy the son ran out and got a knife and started popping the tires of the guy so he wouldn't leave.

Steve Gregory

And you heard about the neighbor talking about the flyer that went out with a sketch of both the Father and the Son. That was an interesting tactic as well as they handed out those flyers almost exclusively in this neighborhood. And with that \$80,000 reward hanging over it. A lot of people came out of the woodwork. At this point, I was able to speak with Lieutenant Hugo, he's the head of the department's cold case you and did you get really good solid intel from that press conference? I mean, those tips that are coming in I know, detectives have been up north of LA, they've been in Texas, I mean, you got some pretty solid leads,

Lieutenant Hugo

there was certain few, maybe two or three that were really, really tied the suspect to all three of these murders, these three phone calls that I'm talking in that came in or came in, right, like within an hour after the press conference, so they must have been watching this on TV, or they heard it on the radio or something. But they they pretty much came out of the woodwork pretty quickly.

Steve Gregory

As soon as you make something public, Is it unusual to get such solidly so quickly?

Lieutenant Hugo

It is and from my experience, usually when when there's some kind of reward or when the victim or witnesses in these cases, feel like they're safe. Maybe they're in maybe not living in this area anymore. And they're gone from the from the neighborhood, they feel a little more secure. But it's very seldom that we get these these big leads and these big witness statements right out of the gate.

Steve Gregory

And is it also unusual for a murder suspect in any any of those accomplices to live so close to the murder scenes?

Lieutenant Hugo

Oh, you know, it's not unusual?

Steve Gregory

Well, let me rephrase. Is it unusual for someone to go back and sort of settle in, in the same community where the murders were committed as opposed to taking off and going somewhere else.

Lieutenant Hugo

So it's not unusual when when your neighbors fear you, you know when there's fear in the neighborhood. And I want to say a lot of these people that live in this neighborhood either had an idea that this was the suspect or had heard through other people that this was the suspect, but a lot of these people are they're there because they live in the area and that their fear that you know if they say anything to the police, they may be a victim at some point.

Steve Gregory

So is it safe to say most of your tips came from in this neighborhood? Yes, by now other media outlets were on the scene, but I was still inside the perimeter. But all of a sudden I was given some insider information.

Unknown Speaker

You're going to take me in your car, your primary, so they need to be over there. So they're going to they're going to take out the primary, the primaries in his van, and they're going to walk him this way toward one of the radio cars.

Steve Gregory

I was told where to stand to get the best view of Anthony Velasquez as he was being transferred from the van to a patrol vehicle, from here he would head to central booking where he'd be processed and put into a cell. The video I captured was pretty good I had the best seat in the house and his Velasquez was being walked over to the SUV I had a chance to ask him a question

Why do you kill those people?

Deputy

Excuse me sir

Steve Gregory

Any reason why you killed them?

that SUV drove away another pull forward that one was for his father.

The operation was over and labeled as success the best part no one was injured and there was no gunfire. As of this airing, Anthony Velasquez was charged with three counts of murder. His father Manuel was charged with one count of murder and as an accessory in at least one other murder. The son was in jail on \$6 million bail the father 2 million. It's not clear who or how many people will be eligible to split the \$80,000 reward. Now it would appear the three murder cases were solved. And this is a program about unsolved cases. But at the time we were in pre production. The cases were still unsolved, but we thought you'd like to go through the process of seeing how just the smallest tips and leads can lead to the biggest results. This was a great opportunity to bring you along with us behind the scenes. Now to see some cool pictures and video of the arrest go to [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com) key word "unsolved". Coming up a tragic case from San Bernardino County involving a newborn. But first this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

## **SEGMENT 7**

Steve Gregory

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

This is the death of Baby Jane Doe number 45. San Bernardino County Sheriff's homicide case number 191407365. The Henry number is 2014-87. Detective Eric Ogaz is spearheading the case. I sat with him at the Department's Homicide Unit in the city of San Bernardino. Caution. This case is graphic. Detective, thanks for your time. Thank you. So let's start a Baby Jane Doe. That's got to be one of the most disturbing things you hear. I mean, Baby Jane Doe, that's, you know, anything dealing with children

missing children abuse children, and in this particular case, Baby Jane Doe that ended up being found deceased?

Detective Ogaz

That's correct. Well, basically on October 1 of 2014, the workers at the advanced disposal, which is a dump yard, left in the high desert, Victorville speery area, they were sorting to the trash. When the trash truck arrives, they dump the trash in a certain area in the trash then goes up a conveyor belt, and the workers and employees separate the recyclables from the regular trash. While the workers were sorting through the trash and the conveyor belt, they came across a newborn child.

Steve Gregory

Wow. Have you spoken to anybody yet from that company? Or is that company still around?

Detective Ogaz

That company is still around and everyone there has already been spoken with.

Steve Gregory

I've heard about this. In other cases, I remember a case in Orange County where there were prostitutes being disposed of this way. This seems to be you know, could this be a nefarious act? Do you think or this was a situation where a mother had an unwanted pregnancy? What's your experience tell you on this?

Detective Ogaz

Well, that's what we're trying to figure out. That's what we need to find out. Regardless of what the situation was, we need to find out why the child was deceased on a conveyor belt in the dump why someone placed their child into a trash can? As far as the reasons or how or why that's something that could come to the conclusion, based upon our investigation.

Steve Gregory

So were you able to pinpoint the route that this particular baby may may be a part of?

Detective Ogaz



Yes, based upon the where the trash was dumped at, at the facility, they were able to connect it with the actual truck that dumped in that area. And then the route of that truck was to the Hesperia area.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so then, if you focus on Hesperia area, and then when did you get this case? Because I know sometimes you just you get these cases, and they've already been looked at by other detective. So when How long have you had this case?

Detective Ogaz

I got this case approximately six months ago, six months ago.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so tell us a little bit about some of the progress you've made thus far. So you say his barrier is where the route originated? Was it a residential route or an industrial route?

Detective Ogaz

It was a residential route.

Steve Gregory

And then do how do you focus in on that then?

Detective Ogaz

Well, basically going through the report investigators at the time went out did door to door contact reference, the area and the residences in which that track that trash truck picked up the trash, hoping to identify or locate a female that looked like they, you know, just had a child for someone that said, Hey, we had a neighbor, we know she was pregnant, and now she's not pregnant, but we've never seen the child anything that would stir up a lead

Steve Gregory

was the I don't know if this is a little too in the weeds. But can you tell whether or not it was a baby that was placed in one of those residential the bins with the wheels on it? Or was it in another thing? Or is did they pick up only those bins or whether like a larger dumpster? Do you know any of that kind of detail?

Detective Ogaz

No, that's hard to tell. I mean, when the like I said it's all the trash is dumped in one pile and then goes up the conveyor belt. And as you can imagine, you know, the child's in the back of a trash truck that's constantly getting compacted and trash getting mixed in and around you know around the child.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with detective Eric Oh gas with the same Bernardino County Sheriff's Department about a baby Jane Doe so what else can you tell us about the young child ethnicity? What was the condition of the body?

Detective Ogaz

It was an Hispanic female child and the condition of the body that she was, she was mutilated obviously. By it appears to be in we believe to be from the trash compactor.

Steve Gregory

Not from some not from another person.

Detective Ogaz

At this time we have no reason to believe that we believe her injuries were found in the trash, the trash the compaction, compaction, you know, the compaction on the truck.

Steve Gregory

So any idea of the timeline? How long had the baby been deceased?

Detective Ogaz

That is something that there was autopsy obviously conducted by the Samuel County Coroner's Office, and they came to a conclusion of a proximate time and that's something I kind of want to hold on myself right now. Sure. When I interview people and talk to people in the future

Steve Gregory

Understandable. The thought that you're in homicide you've done cases before what it what type of a person does something like this

Detective Ogaz

I'm not a psychiatrist.

Steve Gregory

yeah, but but you don't want homicide detectives they have an innate sense they can kind of dig science people up you science people for a living. So what type of person does this?

Detective Ogaz

Well, there's different circumstances with this could happen. It could be a real facetious person just a cruel you know, does not want to have the child and discards a child in the trashcan. It could be a stillborn trying to hide either from parents or, or a loved one that they were pregnant and throw the child in the trash. I mean, there's different reasons why people do things that I don't understand. But nevertheless they do.

Steve Gregory

To learn more about this case, and others go to [KFIAM640.com](http://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 with Detective Ogaz from the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department but first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.

### **SEGMENT 8**

Steve Gregory

KFI AM 640, heard everywhere on the iHeartRadio app. This is Unsolved. I'm Steve Gregory. October 1, 2014. Workers at a trash sorting facility in Victorville come across the most gruesome discovery possible. A newborn on a conveyor belt. Detective Eric Ogaz, with the San Bernardino County Sheriff's homicide unit says the baby was dumped, abandoned without a trace. Detective, given the anonymity and the condition of the baby, I suppose it's like finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. So where does one start when investigating this? And do you have any leads?

Detective Ogaz

Well, at the time, the child was on the conveyor belt, once the child was located by their workers, they immediately stopped the conveyor belt backed away in order to find a supervisor. Deputies responded

and that basically froze that crime scene. So nothing moved, it was touched around that child, investigators went out there and went to the trash that was near that child and look for envelopes addresses your mail that you know, your bills that come to your house. And they had several addresses, which also confirmed the route that truck took during that period of time, and then make contact at those addresses looking for leads.

Steve Gregory

Then when you look back at that, you know, I think there's always an assumption that it's probably a young woman, maybe a high school student. Yes. And do you go to nearby high schools have you do you do that as well?

Detective Ogaz

they did. Investigators back then went back to the Spirit Unified School District and interviewed numerous teenage females also checked for their attendance records to see if anyone was absent for extended period of time. during that timeframe, in for obvious reasons. I mean, we're talking to all the the females and students there, you're hoping to get leads, you're hoping that someone's gonna say, yes, my friend was pregnant. And, you know, this is why I think she did or she's not pregnant anymore. That some someone who knows something, or you would obviously sit down and actually talked with that student. And just like based upon interview and them, you could tell by talking with them, that they are scared or upset, and that they were preyed on by talking with them and getting them to admit to that.

Steve Gregory

And the sad thing about that is obviously, nothing panned out. Sounds like nothing from that no approach. But, you know, it could also have been an older woman, it could have been a absolutely a different age woman who, you know, an unwanted pregnancy, or could have been a relative of or friend of someone that came over. And so yeah, that's, that's what I mean. It's just so what happens next, how, where do you go from here?

Detective Ogaz

Basically, from here, we have some things that we're trying to new technologies, I guess you would say in, in, in homicide, things that we could research that obviously I can't say at this time.

Steve Gregory

But you're right, when you say things, you talked about forensics or?

Detective Ogaz

Lab technology and forensics look, absolutely.

Steve Gregory

Okay, where does this take you?

Detective Ogaz

Hopefully, it's going to lead us to you know, if the child is mother has been in prison before or incarcerated before to DNA, hopefully, we could match that now to that person, as we know, you're arrested for a felony. And now in California, you're given a DNA swab that's held. And um, hopefully the, we're getting the DNA from the from the baby having a submitted and put into what's called our coded system, and hopefully it comes back to match some match.

Steve Gregory

You said earlier, you didn't want to talk about how long you thought the baby was deceased. But can you tell us about how old the baby might have been?

Detective Ogaz

I will say this, it was a newborn. It was a newborn? Newborn. So define newborn and your umbilical cord still attached?

Steve Gregory

Okay. That's, yeah, that's Gosh. That's a tough one to swallow. You know, that's a tough one to really digest. And I can't imagine those workers on a conveyor belt. Yes. And I mean, they must have been a little bit in shock. I remember the conveyor belt workers. It was a recycling plant, and I believe was Anaheim a few years ago, and they all had to go through therapy and trauma because they didn't, you know, they didn't realize they're used to seeing so much trash and stuff. And then when you see a human body, you don't just your brain doesn't process it.

Detective Ogaz

No, absolutely. Especially when, you know, all all deaths are tragedies, especially be the woman as a child. I mean, not only for the workers there, but even the deputy sheriffs that responded and

investigators that handle that case. Whenever you see a child, that's a newborn, mutilated. It makes you it makes your heart sank. And it's hard to see. And it's difficult to take

Steve Gregory

in. So what is it you want people to do? I mean, what do you need from people now?

Detective Ogaz

Well, you know, during that timeframe of October 1 2014, in the high desert area, when I say a high desert meaning Victorville, to spirea, or Apple Valley, if you're aware of anyone at that time that was pregnant and towards basically full term, and then was no longer pregnant, and they had no excuse to what happened to that child, you know, contact us any leaves that you guys can give us, we would greatly appreciate, you know, it's a goal of mine. You know, she's identified to us as Baby Jane Doe. 45. And it's a goal of mine to put a name to her. I mean, as of now she's laid to rest with a name of Baby Doe 45. And I like to put a name to her.

Steve Gregory

I know this is a goal of yours, and you're talking about new technology, are you hopeful you'll you'll be able to solve this case?

Detective Ogaz

I am hopeful and I'm going to continue to work it I'm not going to stop working at are different angles. And to hopefully I can make that conclusion and get her identified and find out why. I can say there's several different reasons why, you know, not that they're good reasons. But to why something happened. I'd like to get her identified.

Steve Gregory

You might want to take this opportunity to remind people about safe surrender.

Detective Ogaz

Oh, absolutely. You know, if you if you have a child, you could drop the child off at should drop the child off, you can bring the child to like a local hospital. And they will take the child with no questions asked fire departments, fire departments, too.

Steve Gregory

police departments here. I mean, pretty much any law enforcement or first responder agency. Absolutely. And the key is no questions asked.

Detective Ogaz

That is the key.

Steve Gregory

Better alternative.

Detective Ogaz

Absolutely.

Steve Gregory

Detective, thank you so much for your time. Appreciate it.

Detective Ogaz

Oh, you're welcome. Thank you.

Steve Gregory

Good luck.

That's gonna do it. For more on this and other cases, go to our website at [KFIAM640.com](http://KFIAM640.com). Keyword "unsolved". 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 program is produced by Steve Gregory and Jacob Gonzalez. Our digital producer is Andro Mammo. Coming up next, it's Coast to Coast. But first, this is KFI AM 640. Time for a news update.