

EPISODE 304 – The Cellphone Murder / LA County Crime Lab

Announcer

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Steve Gregory

On any given day in Southern California, hundreds of investigators are working more than 10,000 unsolved cases. That's thousands of friends and families who have lost loved ones, thousands of people who got away with a crime, and thousands 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 gone cold, baffled investigators or just needs that one witness to speak out. This is Unsolved with Steve Gregory.

Steve Gregory

Santa Ana Police Department homicide Cold Case Number 14-16963, the death of Ruby Rubio. This case shocked the residents of Santa Ana because it was the senseless murder of a young girl over nothing more than a cell phone. Santa Ana Police Detective Mike Gibbons takes us back to July 13, 2014 11:56 in the morning.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Ruby Rubio, she's a 15-year-old girl who just recently had her quinceañera. She's a sophomore at Saddleback High School, and she was walking fairly close to the school, it's summertime and she's with her seven year old sister. So they're walking westbound on Warner from Flower area and as they're walking, they get approached by what's described as a male Hispanic, in his late 20s, about 5'8" to 5'10" like medium build. He's wearing a black baseball cap, white tank top and some light blue jeans. This male comes up and he asks Rubio, Ruby Rubio, what time it is. She reaches in to grab her phone to check the time to help him out and he grabs the phone from her and takes off running and he runs in the opposite direction that had been walking, he runs eastbound to the next street, which is Towner. Ruby goes chasing after him. Sad story, she went chasing after him because she had been in trouble she had lost two phones previously and she had just recently got this one for doing well in school, so she was not going to let it go. And so she ran she chased after him and the male jumps into a car that actually is waiting in the middle of the street. So this was staged, car is waiting, he jumped in the passenger side and she realizes that she's not going to be able to get up to him, and she makes the decision that she is going to jump on the trunk of the car. So she jumps onto the trunk of the car as it's driving away. It starts driving away and she's hanging on to the car by the antenna and the driver starts driving back and forth making zigzag motions as he speeds down the street about 40-45 miles an hour on a residential street. Ultimately they're successful and they they toss her from the car and she strikes her head on the on the roadway. And her little sister had to witness this and runs up to her and finds her unresponsive. So the car drives and flees, this vehicle is a gray or silver they believe it's possibly a Pontiac Grand Am like early 2000s. It it continues driving southbound and ultimately out of view. A neighbor comes out sees Ruby laying down in the roadway and they call for law enforcement and for fire department. Ruby's unresponsive still, she's transported to the hospital with significant injuries including a skull fracture. She's in intensive care for a couple of days but on on July 5 at 5:30pm unfortunately, the hospital notified us that that Ruby succumbed to her injuries.

Steve Gregory

She actually at one point had regained consciousness.

Detective Mike Gibbons

She had consciousness very briefly.

Steve Gregory

And was she able to tell you anything?

Detective Mike Gibbons

No.

Steve Gregory

No.

Detective Mike Gibbons

No, the statements that we received were solely from there was another pedestrian that was in the immediate area and, and witnessed the incident, including from when she first took the cell phone out and then also saw the person run around the corner and get into the car, and from Ruby's seven year old sister.

Steve Gregory

You said earlier that this was a setup. Explain that. I mean, was this was this a setup to steal the phone all along or was there some other purpose?

Detective Mike Gibbons

So there's particularly at this time being 2014, there was a lot of, we call them snatch and grabs, there was a lot of robberies where people were stealing chains or different jewelry or items from somebody. But the fact that Ruby was walking westbound on this South sidewalk. The person that asked her what time it was, was walking eastbound and then after they took the phone from her, continued running eastbound, and on that very first street in the middle of the roadway was an awaiting vehicle. So that that indicates to me, it would appear that the person was dropped off with the intention of going up and trying to steal from her and the car was waiting.

Steve Gregory

Her? Or do you think that they were just anybody that showed up?

Detective Mike Gibbons

It's hard to say whether but but the fact that that this car was the very next Street East would suggest to me that may have been somebody that had driven by saw her viewed her as a potential target or an easy target. You got a 15-year-old girl and a seven-year-old little girl, and at least now who doesn't have a phone with them. So if their intent was to steal a phone, unfortunately, they they were cowards and and chose to attack a 15-year-old.

Steve Gregory

And you do have a sketch of a guy, so there presumably was another man driving.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Correct.

Steve Gregory

So you have at least two men out there that potential suspects?

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yes.

Steve Gregory

This happened in 2014, the guy was described is late 20s, early 30s. So was there any evidence on the phone? Were you able to gather any evidence from that? Like, like DNA kind of stuff?

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yes. So so that phone obviously was taken initially. Within hours, detectives were tracking that phone. That phone was tracked to residents on the very street that that Ruby died, or where the or injury occurred. Detectives stopped a vehicle that was leaving, and and they were able to locate the phone. But unfortunately, it was from a neighbor that that found the phone on the ground. Apparently, the suspects after they realized that she got flung off of the car, they didn't want the the phone anymore, so they they threw it out the window. And a neighbor opted to take the phone and place it in his car instead of notifying anybody. So we did collect DNA. But now we have a mixture of whoever previously had touched the phone, including Ruby and whomever else may have access to that phone, the suspects DNA, now we have another contributor, and when the contributors become too many, it's problematic for us to get an actual profile and identify a particular person.

Steve Gregory

In a case like that is is DNA more preferable than a fingerprint? Were there any usable fingerprints on the phone?

Detective Mike Gibbons

There were not.

Steve Gregory

No Ok.

Detective Mike Gibbons

None that we're able. A print is actually fairly difficult. You have to get so many points of identification. So we really like DNA. DNA is is easier for us to gather something that's identifiable. But whether it's DNA or fingerprints, you put a whole bunch on top of each other and it gets...

Steve Gregory

...it's a mess.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yeah.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with Mike Gibbons of the Santa Ana Police Department, Cold Case unit. When we come back we'll talk more of the case of Ruby Rubio but first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. If you're listening on the app, you can send us a tip about a case, a story idea or a comment about the show, just tap the red microphone on the app and record your message.

Steve Gregory

We're talking with Detective Mike Gibbons about the death of Ruby Rubio, a horrific story of a 15-year-old girl who wanted her cell phone back, that had just been nabbed by somebody, and she jumped on the trunk of a car, and the driver of the car swerved hard enough throwing her off of that trunk, she lands on her head on the pavement dies a few days later at a hospital. Before the break, Detective, we were talking about, you know, some descriptions and and I understand that the description actually led to a sketch, why don't you talk about that?

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yes, in an attempt to better identify the suspect and to also distribute the sketch not only to our patrol personnel, but through the media for for attention within the community. A composite sketch was drawn and that was distributed. It did generate some interest shortly after the incident itself. Some people had called in listing potential suspects. In particular, there was somebody that was not a male, but a female, that dressed generally in males clothing with a very short haircut, that bore a very strong resemblance to the person in the sketch. Ultimately, we have not been able to either identify somebody through forensics or obtain enough incriminating information to determine if that particular individual is involved or not. We've also reviewed surveillance video we obtained surveillance of the vehicle itself. We've had some people call in regarding similar vehicles, and then follow up, tracked those cars down, interviewed owners. We were able to you know, in some cases determine alibis that that this particular individual had his car at work at the time of this incident, and it was in like South Orange County, so we were able to rule some of these out. There's some that we have not been able to rule out. But we don't have anything that's that's yet short of any witnesses that are willing to come forward. It's my belief that there are people that have talked about it, you know, within potentially within the the gang gang culture. I believe that the death of a 15-year-old girl is going to generate quite a bit of conversation. But people are, for whatever reason, not willing to come forward to law enforcement with it. So one of the hopes is today with the passage of time that somebody's going to hear this that somebody will be in a different position in life that they won't be either in high school and subjected to any type of criticism, somebody that now maybe have a family and they can sympathize. We we did a story on this, this particular case on our segment or YouTube segment called For The Record, it's a homicide spotlight and if anyone were to go on and view that link, you can see an interview with the parents and eight years later. The anguish in in her parents, it's it's no different than if it happened yesterday.

Steve Gregory

Sure.

Detective Mike Gibbons

And just to see how defeated they are and how, I mean just imagining as a parent, how they've lived the last eight years of their lives, just in tremendous pain every single day with the loss of their daughter.

Steve Gregory

What about a reward, is there a reward in something like this?

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yes, again, there is a high probability that that the person involved in this is from a gang. If we can attribute the the the initial robbery or theft of this to a gang member and attribute this as a gang homicide, then then it would be eligible for the Santa Ana Police Department gang homicide reward program with a reward of up to \$50,000.

Steve Gregory

And that's usually a big motivator.

Detective Mike Gibbons

That's, that's why it's there.

Steve Gregory

The surveillance video you said you got, where did you get this surveillance video?

Detective Mike Gibbons

So we did a an area canvass in the direction of travel of the vehicle just going through from house to house to house looking for surveillance cameras. And although they're not as prevalent as they are today, there's still plenty of houses that had surveillance cameras, so we tracked it as far as we could, and obtained footage from as many cameras as we could. None of them yielded a full license plate for the car.

Steve Gregory

What about the parents in this case? Are you in touch with the parents?

Detective Mike Gibbons

We have been in touch with them. They were here last year, we included them in our For The Record segment, so they had the opportunity to speak about their daughter. Again, it it tugs at your heart every time to see that video and just realize how one incident just destroys an entire family. You know, all over a phone, a cell phone.

Steve Gregory

A piece of property, small piece of property at that. The car and you said earlier that you know that it might have been a Pontiac Grand Am type vehicle. But you said you were able to see the vehicle in the surveillance video. Were you able to confirm that in the surveillance?

Detective Mike Gibbons

It's it's hard to say definitively that it's a Grand Am. The general consensus among most of the detectives is that it's a early 2000s Pontiac Grand Am.

Steve Gregory

Gray or silver.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Yes. A light, if it is gray, it would be on the lighter end of the spectrum or even faded.

Steve Gregory

Do you think, and I know it's all very speculative, but I want to ask if you think the perps are from Santa Ana, or do you think they were outsiders coming into town for opportunity?

Detective Mike Gibbons

No, I would expect that they were from the from within within the city and probably most likely from generally the central portion of the city.

Steve Gregory

Why do you say that?

Detective Mike Gibbons

With as many gangs as there are in Santa Ana, people don't generally, gang members don't generally go into rival gang neighborhoods to do street crimes. They will go of course to go and commit violent acts against their rivals, but they won't generally go a great distance to commit something as as little as a as a snatch and grab grab or just a theft from a person.

Steve Gregory

Well, listen, detective, appreciate your time. I certainly hope you get your person in this one, and I can't even say get your man because it could be a woman that you're looking for.

Detective Mike Gibbons

It's entirely possible, we're not going to rule anything out, if anyone is able to view that photo, or go to our YouTube page or even the Santa Ana police Instagram page and view that For The Record version or on your website for the photo.

Steve Gregory

We're gonna link I think we're gonna link and embed all that in there. So they'll go to the KFI site, there'll be able to link through this and that way we can keep it all right with the case notes.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Perfect.

Steve Gregory

Thank you for your time.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Thank you very much.

Steve Gregory

And best of luck to you on this, poor girl this poor girl I hope you find the person that's responsible.

Detective Mike Gibbons

Thank you very much.

Steve Gregory

Coming up new information in a case previously featured on this show. But first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. To reach the Unsolved team through the iHeartRadio app, just press the right microphone and leave us your story idea, tip or comment, or you can press pound 250 on your cell phone and say the key word Unsolved. In Episode 302, we featured the case of Danah Rojo-Rivas, the 16-year-old girl who was killed in the backseat of her mother's car in Lynwood, the family was headed home from church. On September 8, 2022, LA County Sheriff's investigators held a press conference at the scene where the shooting happened. Here now is the actual press conference with Lieutenant Mike Gomez.

Lieutenant Mike Gomez

We're here today to ask for the public's help regarding the 2016 unsolved murder of 16-year-old Danah Rojo-Rivas. Before I begin, I just want to read something from Supervisor Janice Hahn, who unfortunately could not be here today. 'I applaud the Sheriff's Department investigators who have been able to identify the car that the suspect was driving and narrow down their persons of interest. But Danah's murder has not been brought to justice yet, and we still need the public's help. If you have any information that could help investigators solve this crime, I urge you to bring it to the Sheriff's Department.' Danah was murdered on Wednesday, November 23, 2016, which was the day before Thanksgiving. Danah and her family were stopped for a red light on Euclid Avenue at Long Beach Boulevard here in the city of Lynwood. Danah was the backseat passenger in her car driven by her mother Sandra. Her brother Ethan was the front passenger, there were simply headed home after spending the day at a nearby church. At the time of the shooting, Danah's dog Luna was on her lap. In the chaos after the shooting, Luna got loose and was struck and killed by a passing car. The intended targets of the shooting were being chased by a light four door sedan occupied by three individuals. We know there were many witnesses to this murder, some of which have come forward. Since we since we last provided an update this past June, investigators have received tips from the public and have conducted numerous interviews. The information received is in the process of being vetted out. However, as a result of one of the tips, investigators are now confident they know exactly what car was used by the suspects during the commission of this crime. The owner of that

car has been identified and interviewed. The totality of the information received from tips, interviews and investigation thus far has allowed investigators to narrow down their persons of interest. Additionally, investigators still need to talk to the driver of the vehicle, which turned on to Euclid from Long Beach Boulevard just prior to the shooting. We know from their prior Crimestoppers tip that their vehicle was struck by gunfire from the barrage of bullets which took Danah's life and we are urging that person to please contact Homicide Bureau. Is there any questions?

Steve Gregory

At this point? I asked a series of questions you can't really hear them because we're in a small parking lot near the intersection of Euclid Avenue in Long Beach Boulevard. Lieutenant Gomez tells me there are three persons of interest and they've received more than five good tips

Lieutenant Mike Gomez

From my understanding they were all in the vehicle at the time. At this time, like I said there's persons of interest but I won't get into specifics.

Steve Gregory

Part of the new information has to do with the identification of the car used in the shooting back in 2016. I asked Gomez where the car is now.

Lieutenant Mike Gomez

That car has since been salvaged, and so thus a little difficult to process and, you know, further investigate. From my understanding it's been scrapped.

Steve Gregory

And when I asked about the forensic evidence taken from the round that struck Danah.

Lieutenant Mike Gomez

You know what, I'm not going to get into specifics at this time. She was struck once, once in the upper torso area.

Steve Gregory

The shooting had happened during the car chase so I asked Gomez what happened after the shooting.

Lieutenant Mike Gomez

They ultimately fled during the time of the incident. One traveled north the other South and ultimately left the location After the shooting one individual did come back at that time, ultimately, I believe, did speak to investigators, and again, has spoken to them. Again, I won't get into specifics regarding the actual incident as it's still currently under investigation. I believe so I believe so. In regards to the fact that the information regarding the car has now come to light, and so again, we're hoping people today deputies will be passing out flyers regarding the incident and hopefully bring more light to the incident so that people can talk about it and hopefully come forward with anything they may have seen or heard the day of the incident.

Steve Gregory

Coming up, Donna's mother Sondra arrives and speaks to reporters for the first time in years. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. We've been reviewing the case of Danah Rojo-Rivas, a 16-year-old girl who was shot and killed in the backseat of her mother's car the day before Thanksgiving in 2016. Detectives held a press conference on September 8, 2022, to announce new details about the case, including the identity of the car used in the shooting, and that they're looking for three persons of interest. We're gathered in a small parking lot next to the intersection of Long Beach Boulevard and Euclid. Toward the end of the press conference, Danah's mother Sondra walks up she came to the microphone, this is the first time she's spoken to the media in years.

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

I'm sorry, I just came because I was notified and I didn't know I was going to talk I just want to be present every time that I can. It is one of the most important tasks for me in life to try to get whomever killed my daughter and I do appreciate it. It's so hard I appreciate every single one of you coming in like I always like I had been saying for years, the only purpose of these is to catch whomever killed my daughter. I know they are working really hard on it. I know they are putting so much effort for years it's been years and they still working on it all I can say about my daughter is good like I had been saying for five years it's just she was just the light of my house and out of my life and in my family in everything that you do to try to catch whomever. They are getting closer and closer. I know because I feel it in my heart because everything is working good but we still need help we still need support from the people that knows I'm gonna repeat this after this is done. Please. I come to your heart talking as a mother. Danah will never go away, no one's life. We're not gonna stop I'm not gonna stop. If you know something, please come forward and tell them tell the police. I know that Danah is in a better place like everybody says, and she is, but yet, whomever killed her has to pay down here for whatever he or they did, or she did, or whomever it was.

Steve Gregory

Again, you can't hear our questions, but I asked Sondra how it feels to hear the phone ring not knowing if a detective has good news or no news, and how does it feel knowing investigators have identified three persons of interest and the car used in the shooting?

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

I absolutely have all the hope. I know. I have trust in God. God is the one that has me on my feet, so I know it's gonna come out. And every time that that we know something is coming, I know it's for good. I know it's the right timing, I know we've been waiting, but it will happen at some point. So yes, I do feel good when they when I know they are getting little by little, like pieces small pieces every year, but it will go to an end. It will it will catch them eventually I know it will. With all the help I obviously, everything all this is happening because of the all these press conferences giving information and trying to get people to talk. It is helping and it definitely makes a difference when I hear that there's something coming up new because I know we're getting closer to catch the killers.

Steve Gregory

Now a TV reporter asks Sondra, if she's disturbed by the impression that cold cases involving Hispanics aren't being solved at the same rate as other cases. By the way, detectives quickly shot down that theory

with facts about how cases are solved and how it's more about the demographics of where the crime happened and available evidence than who the victim might be.

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

There's no more disturbed I can get she's already gone from here. It's just a matter of time and I know like I said, I do have faith. I know I have to wait. I know there will be a time. I know it can take I don't know there's cases that take 20 years to solve. I don't know how long it will take I will be here until God led me to follow this and to try to keep making people help us as long as it takes.

Steve Gregory

I had a follow up question and ask Sondra how Danah's brother's doing. Her brother was in the passenger seat the day Donna was shot.

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

I was just asked that a moment ago. When this happened, he was 18-years-old. Danah was the strongest of the family, it wasn't even me, Danah was the strongest and then it was me and then Ethan. That night, Ethan was the one taking her out of the car, bleeding out, I paralyzed. I didn't know what to do, he immediately reacted, and he called told me call 911, and he reacted completely like a like a man. He took her, his little sister out and carry her. From that moment it and took care of everything else. When the police came with the detectives went to my house, when the press was outside my house, I was hiding, I was hiding, I didn't even know if I was alive or dead, if it was real or not. Ethan was talking to everyone, he will say, 'Mom, stay here. I'll take care of it. I'll take care of everything.' So he used to come and talk to everybody while I was hiding, and I used to see him through the little blinds to the window. So he became a man in one night just on a second, and from then on he's been like that. Right now he doesn't come to these because now that he's a young adult, it's getting to him very strong, the loss of his little sister. He became good at work, he became good at school. He's an airplane engineer. He's very good at it. But yet, he can't handle this right now because it hurts him so much. But he did it first, you know, he did it first, so now it's my turn to step up he did at the beginning. So now it's my turn.

Steve Gregory

After Sandra's comments, I went over to introduce myself. She actually thanked me for featuring her daughter's case on a recent episode of Unsolved, I asked her what her message is for anyone who might have information about that day or how she's feeling about how the investigation is going.

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

That we are still working on it that the people should know that it hasn't stopped just because more than five years have passed and that in the we're still trying to get the killers of my daughter, that as far as I get the law enforcement support, I will keep going. And I know they for I know that they don't know Danah, and for some reason, they are very, very supportive with me. They are they talk to us with all the confident we are very attached to them because we know we can trust them. It's been a team working together, the plea will be just for whomever knows, I know there's people that know, I know, I saw a lot of people that night, they know, to come forward and talk. They will eventually I know I know they will because you know, five years ago, we didn't have a car now we do have a car identified. So it's happening little by little. So at some point, I'm asking for them to just get brave and talk. They know who they were. I saw a car actually, as a matter of fact, I saw a car because he was behind me and I let them pass first. So I saw the car, I let them pass first and then they came behind me. So if I wouldn't let them pass first, this would never happen. You know, this is the 'what if' in my mind all the time torturing me, that is out of my house completely, but it is in my mind torturing me because I let them pass first. So I know there

was a lot of people it was it was around 930 or so when we came home from church so there were still people around there were a lot of cars passing by. My plea will be like, please be brave, please, please step up, please make the call, please try to help me solve this and try to catch whoever killed my daughter. Danah didn't deserve to die that way on a sidewalk bleeding out like if she was a bad person because she wasn't because she wasn't

Steve Gregory

Your gesture of being a responsible driver, you say you feel guilty about that?

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

Yeah, because it was a stop, and even though they were coming with loud music and you can smell the smell of marijuana from the car from far away. Because of a sense of, 'okay, you go first' and giving that pass and also because something on my, my whole soul gave me an alert about that car. I promise to you I felt something on that car and then I let them pass so they won't hurt us behind us and they still did, they still catch us up on the second turn.

Steve Gregory

Do you feel confident that this crime will be solved and you will find the person responsible or persons responsible?

Sondra Rojo-Rivas

I am and it's not only me like I said they had been working with me since the day one in second one. And it's just a matter of time. I know I am very confident and I do have the hope that it will be solved.

Steve Gregory

Coming up. We go we're no reporters gone before, inside the LA County Crime Lab. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I am Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. To reach the Unsolved team just simply email us unsolved@iheartmedia.com That's unsolved@iheartmedia.com. In May of 2007, the doors open to the Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center commonly known as the LA County Crime Lab. In addition to being the forensic focal point for the LA County Sheriff's Department and the LAPD, it's also used to educate the next generation of forensic scientists and techs through the curriculum at Cal State LA that happens to be where the complex is located. We were lucky enough to sit down with the director of the crime lab for the LA County Sheriff's Department, Jim Carroll. Carroll explains the facility houses both the crime labs for the Sheriff's Department and the LAPD, and though they share in the expense of the building, everything else is up to each agency.

Jim Carroll

When this building was built, some funding was received from the state of California, both agencies needed to upgrade their crime laboratory crime laboratory facilities, and the state wasn't willing to fund the building of two separate structures. So more or less, we were forced to come together and partner in this facility. We share the building, but we have our own dedicated laboratory spaces and we work our own cases.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so LAPD has its own operation and county has its own operation.

Jim Carroll

That's right, we share a front door and we share elevators and we share some office space, but separate cases.

Steve Gregory

So, for the purpose of this, let's talk about LA County and all the cases because I get so many cases from LA County homicide. So let's talk about how you folks operate. How many cases a year does the LA County Sheriff's Crime Lab process?

Jim Carroll

We work over 50,000 cases.

Steve Gregory

50,000 cases?

Jim Carroll

Correct.

Steve Gregory

In one year?

Jim Carroll

That's right.

Steve Gregory

Now, I didn't expect the number to be that high. And we're talking about all kinds of different types of cases, right, can you tell us the different types of cases you might be covering?

Jim Carroll

Absolutely. The majority of our cases in terms of quantity are controlled substances analysis cases. So drug cases where suspected controlled substances are submitted to the laboratory for chemical analysis and that comprises the bulk of the submissions. We also do thousands of alcohol submissions, so blood submissions to the laboratory for DUI cases, or breath samples, collected at DUI investigations.

Steve Gregory

Oh okay, I thought that stuff was all done field side.

Jim Carroll

It is, but the instruments are owned and operated by this laboratory. We calibrate the instruments, and we compile the data from the instruments. But you're right, they are deployed out in the field in law enforcement agency jails primarily.

Steve Gregory

So that's a lot of I mean, that's a lot of evidence, a lot of intake of evidence, right?

Jim Carroll

It is.

Steve Gregory

So how difficult is it to maintain the integrity of that?

Jim Carroll

Well, there are some standard procedures for maintaining the integrity of evidence, all evidence submitted to our laboratory is bar coded and tracked electronically. We maintain chain of custody records for all of those items. There are strict requirements for packaging and sealing of each of those items. But every single item is accounted for from the moment it enters our door till the time that leaves

Steve Gregory

Do you store all that evidence here?

Jim Carroll

We store evidence in the laboratory during the period of time under which we're analyzing it, but we're not the long term storage location.

Steve Gregory

Where does that happen?

Jim Carroll

Well, it depends, evidence submitted to us from outside law enforcement agencies take their evidence back when we're done with it. And the sheriff's department has a large storage facility where evidence is stored long term.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so you say the bulk of the tests that you do in this lab here are all drug related?

Jim Carroll

Well, not in this facility. We have a different facility where we do all of our drug testing, but in terms of quantity...

Steve Gregory

In terms of quantity overall. Okay.

Jim Carroll

Correct.

Steve Gregory

And then I understand you do have other labs around the county, right?

Jim Carroll

That's correct.

Steve Gregory

So can you describe what each of those do and how many you have?

Jim Carroll

Yes, we have six total. And so right now, sitting here in the Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center, we have our forensic Biology Unit, we handle trace evidence, document analysis, and firearm and tool mark identification, in this facility. We have another facility where we do most of our chemical analysis, which includes controlled substances, toxicology, and forensic alcohol. We have another facility where we do latent fingerprint analysis and where our crime scene investigation program is based. And then we have a couple of satellite drug chemistry laboratories.

Steve Gregory

You know, I think it's so fascinating. I think people in the public, they only see evidence as, fingerprints and DNA. I think those are the only two things they ever think about, but it goes way beyond that, doesn't it? It's deeper than that.

Jim Carroll

Much deeper.

Steve Gregory

Yeah, so we're going to talk a little bit about that later. But I do want to go to, you're talking about the ballistics, everyone, I think, understands ballistics and that deals with weapons and firearms, right? You say you do that here.

Jim Carroll

We do.

Steve Gregory

You do? How many with this, such attention now with crimes involving weapons and guns being on the rise, does that also impact how busy you become? Because you've got so many of those cases now with guns involved?

Jim Carroll

We're incredibly busy right now. And we've seen the numbers increase year over year.

Steve Gregory

You know, how long does it take? Again, it's always funny to go back and describe what you see on TV, and you know, everything gets solved in 47 minutes. People don't understand that this stuff takes time. I know detectives get frustrated because they can't move until they get some sort of lab results or lab work back. But can you kind of walk us through a little bit? So on a hypothetical, you've got some sort of a ballistics thing, whether it's, I don't know, a round or a piece of bullet or fragment or something like that? Where do you start on something like that?

Jim Carroll

It really depends on what the questions are in the case. A lot of evidence is typically collected at a crime scene. But after some investigation is done, not necessarily all of that evidence needs to be analyzed. So it really depends on what the what the unanswered questions are in the case. But there are many different types of analyses that be that can be performed. For example, if you've recovered a bullet, but no firearm, the bullet can be analyzed in an attempt to determine what type of firearm might have fired it. That gives an investigator some leads to work on to narrow down the scope of the search.

Steve Gregory

And how long does something like that take?

Jim Carroll

Well if it's one bullet that can be done in a couple of hours.

Steve Gregory

Oh okay

Jim Carroll

If there are more bullets, obviously, more time, and other analyses can take more time.

Steve Gregory

When you say other analyses, what types of other analyses might you be talking about?

Jim Carroll

Well, in this in this example, suppose that a bullet is analyzed and a list of candidate firearms is provided, and then a firearm is recovered. And now the question is, is this the firearm that fired the bullet? A

microscopic comparison needs to be performed, and if it's one bullet to one firearm that can take a few hours, but maybe there are multiple bullets, multiple cartridge cases, it could be days or weeks.

Steve Gregory

You know and I hate to keep going back to what we see on TV, but I think that's the most common reference people have when it comes to your work. CSI? Well, first, let me ask you this has CSI helped people understand your profession or hurt it?

Jim Carroll

A little bit of both. It's brought attention to the profession...

Steve Gregory

Right.

Jim Carroll

But there are a lot of misconceptions about what we can do and how quickly we can do it.

Steve Gregory

Okay, what's the biggest myth?

Jim Carroll

Probably that forensic science can answer all questions. It's real common for jurors to have an expectation that all evidence will be analyzed, and that there will be conclusions reached about all the evidence in the case. But that's not the real world. A lot of times we analyze evidence and we're not able to reach a conclusion just due to the condition of the evidence.

Steve Gregory

We'll continue with Jim Carroll from the LA County Crime Lab. But first I want to let you know you can always go back and review past episodes of Unsolved including previous seasons, just go to the iHeartRadio app and search for Unsolved with Steve Gregory. You can also learn more about the cases and see pictures and suspect sketches at KFI-AM 640.com/unsolved. More from the LA County Crime Lab but first, this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. If you're listening on the app and have a tip, story idea or comment, just press the red microphone button and leave us your message. I'm speaking with Jim Carroll, he's the director of the LA County Crime Lab on the campus of Cal State LA. Before the break, you were talking about ballistics and how you handle ballistics. But what I want to also talk about is the fact that one of the reasons that you're so very busy, is that you don't just do LA County homicide crimes. You're doing every city in Los Angeles County, that's not LAPD, correct?

Jim Carroll

That's correct. The Long Beach Police Department has a small crime laboratory, and they handle a lot, but not all of their own analyses. But other than that, we're providing service to the whole county.

Steve Gregory

So in addition to the contract cities, the Sheriff's Department has, you're also the crime lab for all the other little towns too.

Jim Carroll

Right, all the other incorporated cities that have their own police departments, we serve as their crime laboratory.

Steve Gregory

So and I don't know if you would even know the answer to this, Jim, but what percentage of the of the cases you process are strictly LA County Sheriff's related as opposed to all the other cities?

Jim Carroll

You know, I don't have exact numbers, but it's probably a 50/50.

Steve Gregory

Really? Okay. So yeah, so half of all the crimes are usually Sheriff's Department, which is makes sense, I guess, big agency. We're talking about ballistics before the break, and you were kind of breaking it down a little bit about you know, looking at ammunition and being able to to compare around and see if that it might be involved and the weapon. Ghost guns seems to be a big thing right now. How do you forensically handle a crime where you've retrieved or you know, seized a ghost gun and there's no serial numbers, how do you work with something like that?

Jim Carroll

The fact that the firearm is a is a quote unquote ghost gun, it doesn't have a serial number, that doesn't impact our ability to compare a bullet or a cartridge case to that firearm. It the the reason that ghost guns are so there's a big buzz about that right now is because of the lack of traceability of the firearm in terms of registration and ownership and, you know, whether it was homemade, or whether it was, well, typically, they are homemade, but sold from one person to another. So that really doesn't impact what we do here in the crime lab. But but there are concerns about the regulation of those.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so then if you have a crime that was committed, and then a ghost gun was retrieved, I suppose it's just whatever evidence you can lift off of the weapon has known no difference whether or not to ghost gun, right? It's just about the any kind of evidence you lift off of, help me here, whether it's a fingerprint or a DNA sample or something, right? That's where you come in.

Jim Carroll

Exactly, so we process it just the same as any other firearm, we can process it for, for fingerprints for handler's DNA, we can compare bullets and cartridge cases to it. None of that changes for us.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so now, you just said the magic letters DNA, because that's really the thing that everyone wants to know about, and I think it's the thing that no one understands. It's fascinating to me, because DNA now has become, it's become the thing that I think it really has changed the way crimes are solved and at the rate they're solved, and the expediency that they're solved now, and I think it's just that the science of DNA has has, it just keeps evolving and keeps improving. When do you remember DNA becoming a big thing in crime fighting?

Jim Carroll

In the late 1990s, it was starting to become a big thing, and it's only grown since then.

Steve Gregory

So when did the LA County Sheriff's Department's Crime Lab start using DNA as a means to identify suspects?

Jim Carroll

In the late 1990s.

Steve Gregory

Late 1990s? What is DNA?

Jim Carroll

DNA is deoxyribonucleic acid, it's the genetic material that encodes for your hair being brown and your eyes being blue and, and a whole bunch of other traits. But there are segments of DNA that are useful for identifying people.

Steve Gregory

What segments?

Jim Carroll

Well, we rely on what are called STR short tandem repeats, they're sections of DNA that really aren't useful to your body in determining hair or eye color or other traits, or, or building organs or or contributing to things like that, but they're they're segments of DNA that are particularly particularly useful for identifying people

Steve Gregory

Okay, so let's break that down. So when you if you receive a sample because first of all, do you ever go out to the scene are you strictly here in the building?

Jim Carroll

No, we have a large Crime Scene Investigation Unit. We have over 100 people who either as a primary portion of their job or as a collateral duty, respond to crime scenes.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so then you collect evidence, let's say and you bring it back, and you need to extract some DNA. First of all, wouldn't you know that DNA is the thing you need to go for?

Jim Carroll

It's largely dependent on case circumstances and so it's a collaborative effort between us and investigators. A case detective is going to have to make requests of the crime laboratory for certain types of evidence processing, and that's going to be dependent on the circumstances of the case and what the questions are in the case. In concept, you could attempt to collect DNA from every single item of evidence you collect, but that's not going to be probative. So those types of decisions have to be made early on before we begin our work in the laboratory collecting, for example, collecting DNA from an item of evidence.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so you do get an article of clothing and the detective says, 'Can you extract any DNA off of here?' And they just hand you a shirt, a T-shirt, where do you start?

Jim Carroll

Well, you know, in that case, it's interesting. So, obviously, if the shirt was recovered from a person, there would be no request to process it for DNA, if the shirt was taken off of somebody, the victim of a crime taken off a suspect, because there's knowledge of who was wearing the shirt. But you change the circumstance where maybe a robbery occurred, and the suspect was seen fleeing the location wearing a particular style of shirt that's distinct and then that is found abandoned some distance away. Well, we could attempt to collect DNA from the shirt.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so you get that you attempt to collect DNA from the shirt. But it just looks like a normal t shirt. So where do you start?

Jim Carroll

What usually on the inside, because that's the part that's in contact with with skin.

Steve Gregory

Okay.

Jim Carroll

...and we're, in particular looking for skin cells that have adhered to the shirt, so we swab them with a cotton swab and swab the inside of the shirt and attempt to collect those cells.

Steve Gregory

It's that simple.

Jim Carroll

That part is simple.

Steve Gregory

Okay.

Jim Carroll

What happens next is much more complicated, but that part is simple.

Steve Gregory

Okay, I want you to hold that thing because I want to talk about the complication part of that, but first we need to take a quick break. We are at the Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center talking with Jim Carroll. He's the lab director for the LA County Sheriff's Department. But first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640 heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory. And this is Unsolved. To leave us a comment, just hit #250 on your cell phone and say the key word Unsolved. Or press the red microphone button on the iHeartRadio app. We're on the campus of Cal State LA, the home of the LA County Crime Lab, which also shares space with the LAPD. You handle not only the LA County Sheriff's Department's Homicide Bureau requests, but you handle every I guess detectives request of every law enforcement agency in the county with the exception of LAPD and to some extent Long Beach.

Jim Carroll

That's right, we commonly serve about 80 Different agencies.

Steve Gregory

Gheez and you said over 50,000 cases a year?

Jim Carroll

Correct, and that's just the number of cases a single case could have 10, 100 items in a single in a single case. So that but that's that's just counting...

Steve Gregory

I have a lot of questions about all that, but we've been talking about DNA, and I want to stick with DNA, because that's the thing everyone's most interested in. So before the break, you were kind of breaking it down, and you said that you talked about swabbing the inside of a T-shirt that might belong to a suspect. And I said, it seems so simple, you just swab it and stuff and you said, well, yeah, that's the simple part. But the hard part is... now take it from there.

Jim Carroll

Well, so now that we've collected some possible biological material, several things have to take place. We have to determine the quantity collected, it has to be amplified, and ultimately typed. And these are these are several distinct steps. We use a lot of automated technology to increase our efficiencies, we go through that process. But ultimately, we're trying to generate a DNA profile if enough DNA was collected to facilitate that. And with that DNA profile, we can ultimately compare that to a suspect or to a database in an effort to identify a suspect.

Steve Gregory

Okay, so that's a big question I have because I've heard this come up before, if we collect enough of a sample, how much do you need?

Jim Carroll

Well, you don't need much because we amplify the DNA, so...

Steve Gregory

What do you mean by that?

Jim Carroll

We use something called a polymerase chain reaction, to take a small amount of DNA, and essentially make a whole bunch of what I would describe as photocopies of it so that we have enough to type.

Steve Gregory

Okay, then you finish your thought and because I interrupted you that describe that so then what happens?

Jim Carroll

At which point? I'm sorry

Steve Gregory

No when you said you duplicated it and then you, and then I said 'how much of a sample do you need?'

Jim Carroll

You don't need much, you don't even need to have enough to be able to see it. So I we were talking about a shirt that might have been found and how we would swab that shirt, you wouldn't see anything on the tip of the swab, but there might be more than enough DNA to work with. Whereas we could come up with another example you see a red stain on the ground a blood drop, well, that's a visible stain and there's there's a lot of DNA in that stain. But we don't need that much not not these days. In the early days of DNA technology, we needed a fair amount, and swabbing a shirt wasn't going to be fruitful. But today, that's that's not an issue. We swab articles of clothing all the time.

Steve Gregory

Is that one of the many things, that's advancements of DNA technology? I mean, it sounds like you when you say years ago, you wouldn't have been able to do something like that. What is the advancement in DNA, I guess forensics that has really come a long ways?

Jim Carroll

There's so many advances, we need less less DNA to begin with, so our techniques are much more sensitive. We have much more discriminating power. We have the use of automated technology, which allows us to process significantly more samples with the same number of staff. And that's been necessary because the number of submissions for DNA analysis has skyrocketed over the past couple of decades.

Steve Gregory

I've always heard this too, and it's just great because I'm trying to dispel some of the things I have heard about DNA. When you talk about samples degrading. So you've got that blood drop, you say, but that was collected, let's say in 2000. And it's sitting in some box somewhere. What's the lifespan or the expiration date on a blood drop from 2000?

Jim Carroll

That's a great question. And it's there's no easy answer. It's all about how it was stored. If it was if it was dried, and stored in a cool environment, it can last for for many, many years, decades potentially. But if it was, if it was left wet, maybe it was packaged in plastic and moisture was trapped inside. There's going to be severe degradation it might not be useful anymore if it was kept too warm, that's a problem as well, so it's all about the key is proper storage. And one of the challenges with old cases going back 40-50 years is there wasn't much knowledge about what proper storage conditions are and so a lot of evidence wasn't stored properly, maybe it was stored in a warm, humid warehouse somewhere. Well, that's unfortunate.

Steve Gregory

That's exactly where I was headed. Because, you know, when you talk to some of these old timers, and they didn't know, but because the DNA technology, I think back then I had talked to a detective, retired detective that said that they thought it was voodoo science back in the day, no one understood it, they didn't believe it, he was like, 'Okay, this is crazy. This can't happen, it can't be.' So they didn't pay any attention to it. So a lot of these older cases that didn't have the benefit of preserved evidence. And so when you see a sample like that, that's been like you're saying plastic, and it's probably degraded, do you know pretty much immediately, that's like, yeah, there's nothing I can do with this.

Jim Carroll

We don't know just by looking at it. And so if the case is important enough to work, then then we need to give it a try, and we'll find out real quickly if we have usable DNA there. But you don't know till you try and you'd hate to give up or make some assumptions prematurely, and not try to analyze that evidence. If this case is has come back to be worked.

Steve Gregory

Is there any bigger challenge to to extract DNA from a sample? Like you're talking about handler DNA?

Jim Carroll
Handlers DNA.

Steve Gregory
Handlers DNA? What is that?

Jim Carroll
Well, that that's a that's a generic term, but that refers to DNA that is deposited on an item merely by handling it. So for example, the steering wheel of your car, I would expect it if we were to swab the steering wheel of your car, we'd find a whole bunch of your DNA on it because you drive your car every day.

Steve Gregory
So it sounds like it's kind of the new, it's kind of the new fingerprint, it kind of like, do fingerprints even matter anymore?

Jim Carroll
Absolutely. There are many, there are many times that we don't recover DNA, but we do recover fingerprints and vice versa. So fingerprints are still very valid, and very useful in criminal investigations.

Steve Gregory
I would imagine the science in fingerprinting has also come a long ways from the old days where you see him blowing the powder on the thing and you know, twisting the little brush and lifting it off a piece of tape. Does that stuff still happen, is that how you still extract fingerprints?

Jim Carroll
It is. There there have been advances, no doubt. However, conventional fingerprint powders are still very effective, because the goal is to recover a print. So if fingerprint powders recovered the print 30, 40, 50 years ago, and they can recover it today, mission accomplished. But there are other techniques that can be used for certain types of substrates. When I say substrates certain materials, certain objects might benefit from some other more advanced chemical techniques.

Steve Gregory
What is the oldest sample that you've had to look at?

Jim Carroll
You know, in our laboratory, I don't know that I can tell you but myself the oldest case I worked was from 1957.

Steve Gregory
Really, can you tell us about it?

Jim Carroll

I can tell you a little bit about it. Two El Segundo police officers were were shot and killed when they made a traffic stop. And the case was worked back at the time, but for a number of reasons over 40 years later, a suspect was identified. But the original detectives on the case had passed away, the original crime lab analysts had passed away and so the evidence needed to be reanalyzed and was resubmitted to the laboratory. And so I specialize in the analysis of firearm and ammunition evidence, and so I compared the bullets removed from those police officers bodies to the suspect fire.

Steve Gregory

Was it a match?

Jim Carroll

I was unable to reach a conclusion.

Steve Gregory

Really?

Jim Carroll

The firearm was severely rusted. The firearm hadn't been recovered for many years after the crime was committed. It was found buried in somebody's yard and with all the moisture in the soil, the barrel was heavily corroded.

Steve Gregory

Interesting. We're talking with Jim Carroll. He's the director of the LA County Crime Lab, we're the Hertzberg gave us Forensic Science Center, we're going to pause when we come back more on DNA but first this is Unsolved with Steve Gregory on KFI-AM 640, time now for a news update.

Steve Gregory

KFI-AM 640, heard everywhere live on the iHeartRadio app. I'm Steve Gregory and this is Unsolved. You can always contact the team on the iHeartRadio app through the talkback feature, just press the red microphone and record your message, tip or show idea. We've been at the LA County Crime Lab on the campus of Cal State LA. It's inside the Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center, and we've been talking with the LA County Crime Lab Director Jim Carroll. Jim, before the break, you were telling us about a fascinating case, I asked you how far back have you actually tested evidence you said 1957, regarding a case of two officers that were shot during a traffic stop. You said that your results were inconclusive, did you get close?

Jim Carroll

Yes, there were some similarities but I was not able to reach a definitive conclusion and it really had to do with the condition of the bullets, they were damaged and the condition of the firearm at the time it was recovered.

Steve Gregory

You said was buried in someone's backyard.

Jim Carroll

It had been found a number of years later, when somebody was redoing his garden. A metal object was found, the homeowner dug it up, and it was a firearm. He called his local police department and it turned out that that home was in the path that the suspect fled the scene of the shooting. But after being buried for a number of years, you know, with the soil, rain and other water, it was badly corroded.

Steve Gregory

What about a case where you approached it and you were a little unsure about it and you thought to yourself? 'Yeah, I don't think I don't think anything's gonna come from this,' and then then boom, it happens. You get your result. Have you ever had that that one case where you just you just approached it, just shaking your head in doubt, but then it all it just all went your way?

Jim Carroll

Well, that's happened and certainly early in my career, I'm sure there were times where I looked at the evidence that had been collected, or I was processing a crime scene, and I didn't have a lot of hope that we would be able to do much. But sometimes you get surprised. And so I learned real quick, make no assumptions. just approach the case objectively, do your best with it, because there are those times where the evidence doesn't look like it's in very good condition, but just what you needed was there.

Steve Gregory

What about, you know, when you go back in these cases, 1957. What agency did you see gave you that 1957 case?

Jim Carroll

That was from El Segundo.

Steve Gregory

El Segundo.

Jim Carroll

It was a Sheriff's Department investigation, but two El Segundo police officers had been murdered.

Steve Gregory

What are the most common cold cases that you deal with?

Jim Carroll

A lot of cold cases are murders. And they're submitted by sheriff's homicide bureau, and they typically result from circumstances where the detectives years ago, did everything they could at the time. But there's a whole team of cold case detectives who look at these old cases and they consider the evidence that was available and any advances that have taken place since then. So, for example, this this 1957 case, I mentioned, it was solved with fingerprint evidence. And what happened was there were some partial fingerprints recovered back in 1957, and at the time, there was no known suspect, and the databases available to search those partial prints against were limited. This case came back to the

forefront, detectives asked if there was anything we could do using today's technology, and there were two things that needed to happen. The partial prints that we had, two of the prints were portions of the same finger, and there was some overlap. So the two latent prints were traced together to form a complete print, and then it was run through a, I don't want to say a new database, but the FBI had instituted a technology where state fingerprint databases were linked together and referred to as IAPHIS is integrated APHIS or the Automated Fingerprint Identification System, and so those prints were run in the through the APHIS interface, and there was a hit from I believe it was in North Carolina, and the suspect had been arrested subsequently in North Carolina, and that's how the link was made.

Steve Gregory

When was this?

Jim Carroll

That occurred in 2002, I believe.

Steve Gregory

Really?

Jim Carroll

45 years after the crime.

Steve Gregory

That's fascinating to me. You know, and this is all good stuff and we're talking about the upside to all this. But the downside is it's only as good as the data that you have. I mean, people have to be in the system for there to be a match. Right?

Jim Carroll

That's correct. And that had this had this suspect in this case never been arrested and fingerprinted after he was arrested, then he wouldn't have been in that database, and it never would have hit.

Steve Gregory

And the same holds true for DNA.

Jim Carroll

That's right.

Steve Gregory

And because of the sort of the, we're talking like, right on the border of medical and HIPAA and all this other stuff you've got, you know, there's more of an intrusion on DNA, I think people feel than a fingerprint. So that makes it complicated too right? With data input.

Jim Carroll

It does there are there are restrictions as to what can go into into CODIS, the Combined DNA Index System and so you're absolutely right, there are a lot of concerns about privacy. The reality, though, is a crime lab like ours, we're looking at, as I mentioned earlier, some very specific areas of the human genome that don't encode for anything else of interest. So we're not we're not even capable in this laboratory, because we're not set up for it to determine what kind of genetic traits or genetic diseases you might carry. When we look at DNA. We're simply looking for those areas that are used to identify somebody and nothing more than that. But there is concern. And there, there are a lot of regulations about what can be done with DNA evidence.

Steve Gregory

Familial DNA is a thing I've been hearing a lot lately. How does that work?

Jim Carroll

Well, when half of your DNA came from your mom and half came from your dad and if you have a child, half of your child's DNA came from you and half came from the mother. And so by looking at certain linkages, you can you can determine if, for example, the suspect in a crime was a descendant of yours or a parent of yours.

Steve Gregory

How would you trace that back, though? I guess the key is, you're building a family tree, right?

Jim Carroll

Yes.

Steve Gregory

So how does that help you?

Jim Carroll

Well, if, for example, let's suppose that we have a partial hit. Change that that explanation, let's say that we have a DNA profile from a suspect, and we have a hit in the CODIS database. But the hit is only half of that genetic material, that might indicate that we have a relative in the family tree. So what that can be useful for is leading detectives to go interview that person and find out.

Steve Gregory

And sort of going in through the back door,

Jim Carroll

Correct.

Steve Gregory

...going to the relative to get to you.

Jim Carroll

Yes, and so in that situation, we're not identifying a particular person, we're just giving detectives a lead to follow up on.

Steve Gregory

Wow.

Jim Carroll

But that's how cases get solved. You know, forensic evidence is valuable, but there's no substitute for a detective knocking on doors and doing old fashioned detective work.

Steve Gregory

You know, before I let you go, I have to ask you this, Jim, what's the one advancement in this DNA technology that you're that you're seeing on the horizon? Something that you're aware of that's about to happen? Is there anything that what's the next thing that can happen with DNA?

Jim Carroll

Well, I think the the genetic genealogy is really becoming more and more common, we're seeing that used more and more, and I think I think we're going to continue to see cases solved with that.

Steve Gregory

Well, this has been fascinating. I'd like to come back and actually do more of a tour. I want to see you guys do your work.

Jim Carroll

And we'd love to have you back.

Steve Gregory

Good. Okay. Jim Carroll, director of the LA County Crime Lab located inside the Hertzberg Davis Forensic Science Center. Thank you for your time.

Jim Carroll

Thank you.

Steve Gregory

Much appreciated. And that's going to do it Unsolved 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 field engineer is Tony Sorrentino, and our technical director is David Calloway. Our digital producer for this episode is Michelle Kube. Coming up, it's Coast to Coast, but first this is KFI-AM 640, ime now for a news update.