



MEDIA RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY Sheriff-Coroner

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Jim Hart
Sheriff-Coroner

Media Release: December 4, 2020 Cold Case Homicide Suspect Arrested

On December 3, 2020 at around 10:00 a.m. detectives from the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office arrested 63-year-old John Laroche for the killing of Gloria Hassemer. Forensic evidence was found linking Laroche to the 1995 murder.

On June 10, 1995 41-year-old Gloria Hassemer's body was found along the Pajaro River levee near the Highway 1 overpass. Gloria was last seen around 4:00 a.m. that morning walking on Water Street near Ocean Street in Santa Cruz. She was last seen wearing a denim jacket, a blue and black shirt, jeans and white tennis shoes. Gloria may have hitched a ride from Santa Cruz to Watsonville where she was found.

Since 1995, detectives have worked tirelessly on this case in hopes of bringing closure to Gloria's family and to hold the suspect accountable. "This murder shook our community back in 1995, and our detectives have been committed to making an arrest since. We've seen the heartbreak it's brought to Gloria's loved ones and we are proud to be taking this step towards justice," said Sheriff Jim Hart.

With the help of the Turlock Police Department, Laroche was arrested near his house in Turlock without incident. We would like to thank the Turlock Police Department for their assistance in making this arrest.

Laroche has connections to Santa Clara County and the Central Valley and based on his criminal history, we believe there could be additional victims. If anyone has information, please contact our detectives at 831-454-7635.

PREPARED BY:

Ashley Keehn
Public Information Officer

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Family Statement:

On behalf of the family, we are incredibly thankful for the Santa Cruz Co. Sheriff's Department. We greatly appreciate their hard work, dedication, and compassion they've shown to our family over the years. There have been many detectives and others who've worked tirelessly and fought hard to help our family receive justice. Over the past 25 years they've never given up; some have even volunteered their time. We are thankful for their commitment to see that our mother's case was reopened and able to bring us closer to justice after the arrest made yesterday. We hope this horrible person will spend the rest of his life in prison so that he will never be able to hurt another beautiful soul. Our family has never given up hope for justice. We've allowed our faith to be stronger than our pain. We thank God that this arrest was made and for all the officers involved yesterday. Again, we thank the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office and everyone who played a part in this investigation.