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SFPD Provides Update on “Doodler” Cold Case Investigation 19-014

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Crime Bulletin

$100,000 Reward

Leading to the Identification and Prosecution of a Serial Homicide Suspect

02/05/2019

In July, 1975, within two weeks of each other, two separate attacks upon gay white males occurred inside of the Fox Plaza Apartments located at 1390 Market Street. Prior to one attack the victim met the suspect, who was drawing caricatures, at a former all night diner on the 1600 block of Market Street. Both victims provided a suspect description of a black male, approximately 19-25 years old, 5'11-6'0, lanky in appearance, with a medium complexion and smooth skin. One of the surviving victims provided further information to police, which resulted in a composite sketch of the suspect shown below.

From January 1974 to June 1975, there were also a series of five homicides of gay white males that occurred along the Ocean Beach area. The manner and methods of attacks, circumstances surrounding the homicides, and investigative/evidentiary led Investigators to believe that the suspect from the Fox Plaza attacks was also a person of interest in these five homicides.

During one of the homicides there was an audio tape of a call to police dispatch regarding a possible homicide and the caller is yet to be identified. The investigation thus far had led Police to believe the suspect lived in the Bay Area, but outside of San Francisco and would come into the city at night-time on weekends. Information also indicates there is a likelihood of additional victims who may have survived attempted attacks but have not come forward to document the incidents.

1975 Forensic Sketch | 2018 Forensic Sketch

If you have any information, please contact Homicide Inspector Cunningham at (415) 553-9515, Inspector Dedet (415) 553-1450 or Sergeants McWilliams at (415) 553-9208. You may also contact the SFPD Anonymous tip line (415) 575-4444 or Text-A-Tip to TIP411 with SFPD at the beginning of the message.

CASE: 75-038615

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On Wednesday February 6, 2019 at 2:00 PM, the San Francisco Police Department held a news conference at Police Headquarters to provide the community and the news media with an update on the “Doodler” cold case investigation.

During the news conference, SFPD homicide investigators released new information including a $100,000 reward, an age progression sketch of the suspect based on a 1975 forensic sketch and audio from a January 27, 1974 call to SFPD dispatch reporting a body along Ocean Beach.

In the mid-1970s, the San Francisco Police Department investigated several violent assaults of gay white male victims. At least one victim provided information that led to a forensic sketch of the suspect. The San Francisco Police Department’s forensic sketch artist completed an age progression sketch that depicts what the suspect may look like today. Those sketches are part of an SFPD Crime Bulletin announcing a $100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the assault suspect.

One of the assault victims provided information to police that the suspect said he was a cartoonist and was doodling while conversing with the victim in a late night diner. This information led to the suspect being deemed “The Doodler.” A suspect was detained in 1976, but was never charged.

During the same period of time, five gay, white male victims were found murdered in the Ocean Beach / Golden Gate Park area. Four victims were found along the beach and one was found in the park. Following one of these homicides, an unidentified person placed a call to SFPD dispatch reporting a body.

Connections between the “Doodler” attacks and the five homicides led investigators in the SFPD Homicide / Cold Case Unit to believe the same suspect is responsible for both sets of crimes.

The SFPD Homicide Detail is actively working this cold case. Anyone with information is asked to call the SFPD 24 hour tip line at 1-415-575-4444 or Text a Tip to TIP411 and begin the message with SFPD. You may remain anonymous.

A sound file of the 1974 call to SFPD dispatch can be found here. The SFPD reward flier accompanies this news release (PDF)

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