



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **1979 Sexual Assault and Murder of Theresa Pica Solved with Genealogical DNA: Suspect identified as serial sexual/homicide offender**

HAYWARD, Calif., February 8, 2024 – After nearly 45 years of exhaustive and continuous investigative work, the Hayward Police Department has announced that Fred Bernard Farnham is believed to be responsible for the sexual assault and murder of then 48-year-old victim, Theresa Pica.

On May 21, 1979, Theresa was found by three of her children deceased inside her home. Theresa had been bludgeoned to death, and it was discovered that she had been sexually assaulted before being killed. Evidence suggested the suspect entered the home either through an open window or an unsecured/unlocked door.

Homicide Detective David Koller conducted an in-depth and thorough investigation, including collecting evidence that was later determined to contain DNA from Farnham. This was at a time when DNA technology did not yet exist. Through the decades, detectives continued to investigate, using new investigative technologies as they were developed.

The investigation experienced a breakthrough in December of 2023 when detectives received assistance and resources from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Genealogical DNA technology was utilized and identified Farnham as the man believed to be responsible for the rape and murder of Theresa.

In 2007, Farnham died at a hospital in Oregon at the age of 73. Available records indicate that Farnham was a resident in Santa Clara County and there is no information to believe he was ever a resident to Hayward.

Farnham's criminal records revealed he had several prior rape convictions and served time in prison. If still alive, Farnham would be considered a serial sexual/homicide offender, as he was found to be responsible for a number of sexual assault incidents in the greater Bay Area through the years.

Newark Police Department has also announced the identification of Farnham as the suspect in a sexual assault/murder that occurred in 1972 in their jurisdiction. Following the murder of Theresa, it was immediately believed the two incidents were connected based on their similarities. Ongoing collaboration from both agencies took place as each case was continuously investigated before being linked through DNA evidence.

Based on the fact Farnham is believed to be responsible for two sexual assault and murder incidents and based on Farnham's extensive criminal history specifically related to sexual assaults, we have reason to believe there could be more incidents in other cities whose cases have not yet been solved. We have requested any law enforcement agencies who believe they have similar cases to contact Detective Purnell at 510-293-7176.

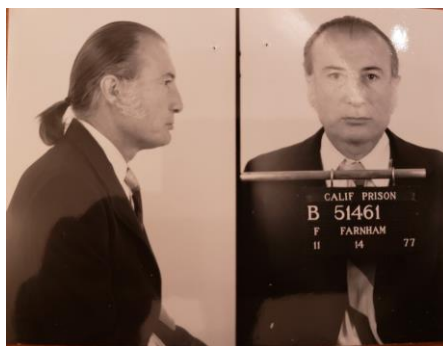
The Hayward Police Department would like to thank the FBI, Newark Police Department, the Serological Research Institute in Richmond California, and the Othram Laboratory in The Woodlands, Texas for their partnership and assistance with this investigation.

We also want to commend the numerous men and women at the Hayward Police Department who have spent countless hours, working tirelessly, to bring justice for the family of Theresa.

The Hayward PD Case number is # 1979-5-1815



Theresa Pica



Fred Farnham

