



BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Detective Services Bureau

Supplementary Investigation Report

Rita Curran Murder

Lieutenant J. T. Trieb # 251

INCIDENT NUMBER: 71BU000538 & 14BU018658

DATE OF INCIDENT: July 19/20, 1971

NATURE OF INCIDENT: Aggravated Murder

LOCATION OF INCIDENT: 17 Brookes Avenue, Burlington, VT

VICTIM: Rita Curran, DOB 6/21/1947

SUSPECT(S): William DeRoos, DOB 12/14/1939

INVESTIGATIVE INTRODUCTION

In late 2019, the Burlington Police Department's Detective Service Bureau reactivated the unsolved cold case involving the aggravated murder of Rita Curran that occurred on July 20, 1971, at 17 Brookes Ave in Burlington, VT. As the Detective Bureau Commander, I wanted to take a different approach with the assignment of unsolved murder cases than what was the norm. Previously, a single detective would be assigned a cold case of his or her choice and that detective would work the case alone when he or she had free time. I personally found this system inefficient and difficult to do with a usually busy case load. Instead, I created a plan to select a case and treat it like the crime had just been committed. The Rita Curran case was chosen, as it was currently assigned to a detective in the detective bureau (Detective Corporal Thomas Chenette) and the case had a lot of physical evidence with which to work. Next, it was decided that this case would be investigated as a team (all detectives and both ID techs) and that we would meet once a week to discuss assignments and progress. At the first meeting, we had a brief overview of the case and discussed the path forward. Because of the case's age, we decided that our primary focus would be on the forensic evidence. There had been a lot of evidence collected during the initial investigation and over the years minimal testing had been conducted. With advancements in DNA testing and genealogy research, we felt there was a chance at finding the suspect in this case. The below narrative is a recounting of the night Rita Curran was discovered murdered.

NARRATIVE

1. On July 20, 1971, at approximately 0129 hours, the Burlington Police Department responded to 17 Brookes Ave. in Burlington, VT, at the request of the Burlington Fire Department's ambulance crew. The two members of the ambulance crew were identified as David Bean and Stephen Olio.

2. Burlington Police Officer Richard Garrow was sent to the above address by Burlington Police Lieutenant Brosseau to meet with the ambulance crew. Upon arrival, Ofc Garrow met with Firefighter Bean. FF Bean stated that upon arrival at 17 Brookes Ave, he and FF Olio located a female whom they believed to be deceased. FF Bean had checked for a pulse, tried to raise the eyelids, and felt the female's hand, which was "quite stiff." Ofc Garrow visually checked the female for breathing and confirmed that she was not breathing.

3. Based on what Ofc Garrow observed, he called LT Brosseau and advised him of what he had heard from the ambulance crew and asked LT Brosseau for more help at the scene. Ofc Garrow was instructed to stand by and to keep the area secure. Ofc Garrow then sealed off the room as best he could without touching anything and waited for detectives to arrive.

4. While waiting for detectives to show up, Ofc Garrow spoke to the roommates who were present. They were identified as:

Beverly Lanpher DOB 06/20/1947

Kerri Duane DOB 10/6/1951

Paul Robinson DOB 12/3/1947

5. Lanpher told Ofc Garrow that she had found the body. She indicated that she shared the bedroom with the deceased female, who she later identified as Rita Curran DOB 6/21/1947. Lanpher stated that upon entering the bedroom after returning from a night out, she observed her roommate (Curran) lying on the floor with her face beaten. Upon discovering Curran, Lanpher called out to the other two roommates who were home, Kerri Duane and Paul Robinson. Lanpher then called the "medical center emergency room" via an operator. Upon disclosing that she believed there was a dead person at their residence, the hospital connected Lanpher with the BFD ambulance crew.

6. Ofc Garrow took preliminary statements from Lanpher, Duane, and Robinson, but they were told to not make any other statements until detectives arrived. They were asked to sit on a couch in the living room next to each other.

Officer Garrow's observations of the residence and crime scene upon his arrival

7. Ofc Garrow's report stated the following: *"Upon my arriving at 17 Brookes Avenue I found that this was a three story apartment building, that it faces north on Brookes Avenue and apartment seventeen is on east side of this building with the front door facing north onto Brookes Avenue. Upon entering the building, I found that it is comprised of a living room, which you walk directly into upon entering, facing south. On the west side, there is a bedroom and you then pass through a small entrance way into the kitchen and off this entrance way is another bedroom on the west side, this is where the body was located.*

8. *On checking the body of Miss Curran, I found that she was lying on the floor with her head facing north in the room. I found she was lying on her back with her legs spread eagle and completely nude, there were clothes between her legs. On checking the appearance of the body, I found that her face was swollen [sic] quite bably [sic], particularly on the left hand side. Her face was starting to discolor and there was blood over it. From this point on, I closed the room off. I could not give a description of the condition of the room- all I did was take a very quick look at the body."*

9. A short time after Ofc Garrow called LT Brosseau, the following detectives arrived at the scene:

Detective Lieutenant Richard Beaulieu
Detective Sergeant Wayne Liberty
Detective David Godin

10. The scene was subsequently turned over to Burlington Police Detectives. Dr. Levine and Dr. Lawrence Harris of the Medical Examiner's Officer and then-Chittenden County State's Attorney Patrick Leahy (now former US Senator of Vermont) arrived. Det LT Beaulieu instructed Ofc Garrow to keep the scene secure and that no one was to enter the area without permission from him (LT Beaulieu) or SA Leahy. Ofc Garrow stated that he was posted at the door of the building until approximately 0700 hours. It was at this time that Ofc Garrow was instructed by LT Beaulieu to conduct a canvass to see if anyone in that surrounding area had heard anything.

11. Ofc Garrow began his canvass by checking the other apartments located at 17 Brookes Ave. Ofc Garrow's report states the following: *"I checked 17 Brookes Avenue, the second floor and could not raise anyone there. On the third floor, I talked to William DeRoss [sic], age thirty one and Michel DeRoss, age twenty four. They both stated that they had heard nothing and Mrs. DeRoss stated that she had been up around 1:00 A.M. but had heard no unusual noises or anything else."*

12. Ofc Garrow spoke to several other individuals during his canvass and that information is documented in his report. See that report for further.

Detective Lieutenant Richard Beaulieu's report describing the crime scene

13. *"In reference to complaint number 538 at approximately 1:40 A.M. while at home I received a call from Lt. Brosseau in which he informed me a call had been received from 17 Brookes Avenue, Burlington and a subject by the name of Mr. Paul Robinson had reported that a HOMICIDE had taken place at this address. I informed Lt. Brosseau to call in all available Detectives and to have them meet me at Headquarters.*

14. *At approximately 1:50 A.M. this writer arrived at headquarters where I conversed with Lt. Brosseau regarding the incident at hand. Lt. Brosseau stated that at the present time he had Ptl. Richard Garrow at the scene and that Ptl. D. LaRock had also been to the scene. Lt. Brosseau continued to relate that as far as he could determine, a young girl had been raped, severely beaten and killed at 17 Brookes Avenue and that Ptl. Garrow is awaiting our arrival at the scene.*

15. *At this time I was met at Headquarters by Sgt. Liberty, Det. Godin. The identification equipment was then obtained and we proceeded to the scene. Upon arriving at the scene at approximately 2:15 A.M. I was met at the door by Ptl. Richard Garrow who informed me that he has secured the scene of the crime and as far as he could see nothing has been touched. Ptl. Garrow informed me that three other persons share the apartment with the victim, these being Beverly Lanpher, Kerry Duame [sic], and Paul Robinson. Ptl. Garrow also stated that both ambulance drivers from the Burlington Fire Department are also present and in the apartment.*

16. *Det. Godin and Sgt. Liberty then checked the scene and commenced to take pictures along with this writer. Photographs were taken of the outside of the apartment complex as well as the inside. While taking the photographs, Dr. Levine the Regional Medical Examiner arrived at the scene where this writer and Dr. Levine inspected the body. From visual observation it was evident that the victim had been severely beaten about the face and she was laying on her back and all of the clothing had been ripped from the front of her body. While Dr. Levine was inspecting the body, this writer commenced to inspect the apartment in question and found the building to consist of three (3) floors with 17 Brookes Avenue being situated on the ground level, East side and the apartment house is located on the South side of Brookes Avenue. (See photos #1, #2 and #3).*

17. *The other apartments in the building have an entrance on the West side, this being 15 Brookes Avenue with one apartment being on the second floor and occupied by Sally Keith, Jerry Kirkpatrick, Leslie Chilton, and Diann Soucy. The third floor apartment is occupied by William DeRoos and Michele DeRoos.*

18. *The apartment in question consist of the following:*

- a. *upon entering the front entrance (photo #1) you are in the living room which consist of a Chesterfield and several chairs*
- b. *immediately to the right of the front entrance and living room is a bedroom situated on the West side which is occupied by Kerry Duane and Paul Robinson (see photo #1 which shows bay window and side window to bedroom)*
- c. *the bedroom of the victim is also located along the West side of the apartment house and is toward the rear of the apartment complex and the window to this bedroom can be seen in photos #1 and #2. This bedroom consisted of two closets, one being on the right hand side of the room which would be the North West corner and the other located on the left of the room which is the South East corner. The room also had two beds one being along the North wall which was occupied by Beverly Lanpher and this consisted of two mattresses laying on top of each other and on the floor. The other bed was situated with the head being along the South wall and this was occupied by the victim.*
- d. *along the West wall was a secretary desk containing personal papers and books belonging to Beverly Lanpher. In the South West corner of the room was a stereo record player with two speakers and this was on the floor. Along the East wall was a four drawer dresser which both girls shared to keep clothing and odds and ends. Each girl had their own closet where they hung up dresses and other personal belongings.*
- e. *the kitchen which is located along the East side of the apartment is also located opposite the victim's bedroom and this consisted of a table and several chairs, stove and refrigerator. Also off from the kitchen is the bath room which measured approximately five feet by eight feet.*
- f. *the rear door from the kitchen opens into a shed or storage area (see photos #5 and #6) and from the shed it leads on to a small porch and out into the rear yard. Further explanation of the shed area will be given.*

19. *This writer along with Det. Godin took photographs of the inside and outside of the apartment building and after these had been completed Det. Godin and Det. Davis were assigned to converse with the occupants of the apartment who were present when the body was found.*

20. *During this time Dr. Levine was conversing with the occupants of the apartment relating to the events that had taken place. In essence, Dr. Levine informed this writer that Paul Robinson and Kerry Duame [sic] left the apartment earlier in the evening and eventually ended up at the Harbor Hideaway where , at approximately 11:15 P.M. they called the*

apartment where they conversed with Beverly Lanpher about coming down for a drink. Dr. Levine continued on to relate that at this time the victim was sleeping, according to Miss Lanpher, so she, Beverly, informed Robinson that she would be right down. According to Robinson, he and Kerry returned to the apartment at approximately 12:30 A.M. at which time they sat in the living room for a while and then he and Kerry went into the first bedroom which Robinson and Kerry occupy. It was shortly after this that they, Robinson and Kerry heard Beverly exclaim "something is wrong with Rita" so he, Robinson got up and went into the bedroom which is shared by Rita and Beverly and it was at this time that he noticed Rita laying on the floor, nude, with blood covering her face and she did not appear to be breathing.

21. Robinson then stated to this writer that as far as he was concerned Rita was dead because she was cold to touch and he told Beverly to call the hospital or emergency number, he can't remember what he said exactly and then a short time later the fire department ambulance arrived.

22. After listening to Dr. Levine and the occupants of the apartment I informed Paul Robinson along with Beverly Lanpher and Kerry Duame [sic] that I would like them to proceed to Headquarters where Det. Godin and Det. Davis would interview them and take their signed statements.

23. At approximately 4:20 A.M. Dr. Lawrence Harris informed this writer that he had finished inspecting the body and we could proceed with our investigation and after we had finished he would like to turn the body over in order to inspect the back and buttocks of the victim. At this time Det. Sgt. Liberty and I commenced to inspect the body where the following notations were made:

- a. that the victim was laying on her back with arms out stretched with her legs and buttocks propped up and spread wide apart*
- b. that her head was tilted to the left side and facing in a Easterly direction*
- c. that her face along the forehead and upper cheek section was severely beaten and with indications of slight cuts or scratches in this vicinity. The face (as seen in photo #A-6) was completely covered with dried blood along with the mouth and teeth of the victim and the vicinity of both eyes were black and blue and swollen*
- d. the hair of the victim was all about the face and floor area in the immediate vicinity with long strands being visible on the floor area as if the hair had been pulled out by the intruder in the scuffle.*
- e. other than the face area, bruises were not visible in the neck section, upper shoulders, breasts and lower abdomen area*

- f. *bruises were noticeable on the right leg just above the knee and on the inside of the leg as seen in (photo# A-1) and also on the left leg inside section (also shown in photo# A-1)*
- g. *clothing consisted of a red and white dot house coat which apparently had been buttoned but during the scuffle ripped down the front and several buttons were missing from same and were on the floor area of the bedroom*
- h. *the victim was wearing an aqua colored night gown made of silk with lace or fringe around the top, this had been ripped completely from the front of the body and was laying underneath the shoulders and back area. The lower section to this night gown was found in the doorway to the closet as seen in (photo # A-3) and same was tagged by Sgt. Liberty.*
- i. *a white bed sheet was entangled around the left leg and continued underneath the buttocks as seen in photo# A-1, # A-3 and# A-4*
- j. *a flowered silk or nylon bedspread had also been ripped from the bed and was entangled about the left leg of the victim and underneath the buttocks of the victim*
- k. *a pair of pink silk panties which were completely ripped from, apparently both legs, where [sic] found to the left of the body and underneath the left leg by the paper bag (as seen in photo# A-3*
- l. *a tan or beige afghan was also entangled around the left leg and partly underneath the buttocks.*

24. *At this time items G. through L. were removed from the body and it was found that the bedsheet along with the bedspread had blood from the victim on same. All items G. through L. were tagged and placed in plastic containers and retained as evidence.*

25. *On further inspection of the body, it was found that the victim's left hand contained strands of hair and these were removed and placed in plastic containers.*

26. *On inspection of the right hand, it was found that it also contained one long strand of hair which was tagged for evidence. Hair particles were than [sic] gathered and preserved as evidence and these were obtained in the vicinity of the head, arms and upper body. At this point I conversed with Dr. Harris and requested that he obtain pubic hairs from the victim and also obtain fingernail scrapings which the ID Officer would pick up at the morgue. Dr. Harris stated that he would take care of the evidence pertaining to the body and would seal and mark it for us.*

27. *At this time hair samples were cut from the head of the victim and several hairs were pulled from the head of the victim and gathered as evidence.*

28. ***An outline of the body was made with a blue marking pencil and on closer inspection of the area about the body we discovered a cigarette butt (as seen in photo# A-5, A-1 and A-2) this being located part way up the right arm and laying on the floor below the elbow of the victim.***

29. ***In checking the cigarette butt in question we found it to be the name brand of LARK charcoal filter tip and this was gathered as evidence. (See Sgt. Liberty's report on cigarette butt and the brands smoked by the occupants of this apartment).*** A section of the flooring (as seen encircled in photo# A-5) was then cut out and gathered as evidence and blood sampling.

30. *After Sgt. Liberty and this writer had finished inspecting the body the house coat of the victim was then cut at the sleeves so that it could be removed and this was gathered as evidence. Dr. Harris then turned the body over on its side where the back of the head, shoulders and back section, buttocks and legs were checked and we could not find any visible bruises. The body was then placed back in its original position and the remainder of the room was then searched.*

31. *Throughout the inspection, Sgt. Liberty and this writer found that the victim apparently put up a vicious struggle as it was previously learned from one of the occupants that the victim had put up her hair in curlers and most of the curlers were found on the floor in the area of the South West corner of the room. On inspecting the curlers which are called wire rollers we found numerous strands of hair and this indicated that the curlers in the struggle were pulled from her head and landed in this area. Also noticeable in this area was a button from the victim's house coat (see Sgt. Liberty's report). This writer however, did not disturb any evidence other than about the body pending the arrival of Identification Officer Harold Baker.*

32. *On further checking the bedroom we found that the lace curtain in the window on the-West side and toward the South corner had been completely torn from the curtain rod and this was laying on the floor on top of the Stereo set. From all indications, the major part of the struggle took part on the right hand side of the bed and in this confined area, as the bed had been pushed a foot or more toward the East wall. This location however, was not checked to its fullest extent as we were awaiting the arrival of ID Officer Baker at the scene for processing. Upon checking the remainder of the bedroom which consisted of the desk and dresser we could not find anything which would be of value. The bedroom door which was painted white was inspected visually and on the edge of same, (as indicated in photo# A-2 and A-3) Sgt. Liberty and writer found blood on this door area which apparently came from the victim or a suspect. This, however, was not removed or touched pending the arrival of ID Officer Baker.*

33. Upon finishing with the body and having same outlined on the floor area, I place a call to Headquarters where I contacted Lt. Brosseau and informed him that he could call an undertaker. Lt. Brosseau stated that he would and would let me know when one was on its way. At approximately 4:45 A.M. George Ready arrived at the scene and the body was removed to the morgue of the Mary Fletcher Unit.

34. At this time, Sgt. Liberty and this writer checked the kitchen and the bathroom area and during this search Sgt. Liberty informed me that earlier in the morning he along with Det. Godin and Det. Davis had checked the rear porch and yard visually and could not see anything in the yard which would indicate that someone had walked through same but the porch section should be check closely as Sgt. Liberty believes that the subject either entered through this section or left by the rear door. Sgt. Liberty continued on to relate that they noticed blood on the outside of the door which could have only come from the suspect as he doesn't believe that the victim could have made it to the door from the condition she was in.

35. After our inspection of the kitchen and bathroom, Sgt. Liberty and this writer proceeded outside where we checked the driveway on the West side of the house. We found that the sandy portion of the driveway revealed no prints of any type, in fact no one had walked on this sandy portion of the driveway since the rain storm on Monday evening July 19th. The grass in the driveway was fairly long and scattered and this did not reveal any evidence. Sgt. Liberty and this writer checked the cellar windows and on doing so found several cob webs which were attached to the window and sill indicating that the windows had not been forced or opened.

36. Upon proceeding into the area of the back yard we found the grass to be 12 to 14 inches in height and wet and upon inspecting this area we could not determine if anyone had walked through same. The rear door leading into the cellar was checked and this was also found to contain cob-webs and showed indications of not being opened for some time. We then checked the rear porch which is indicated in photos #-5, #-6, #-7. The photos show the winter storm door as being open, however, when checked by Det. Davis and Det. Godin this door was closed but not locked.

37. On checking this shed area, this writer found that it measured 4 feet 7 inches wide by 7 feet in length. As seen in photo # 7 a waste basket, gray in color, was tipped over and apparently had been stepped on and the rubbish from same was spread out on to the floor area. On the porch (as indicated in photo #-6) was a white trash basket which was empty and its value at this point is not known. Upon looking at the rear door as indicated by Sgt. Liberty it was plain to see the blood from this location which was situated on the upper center of the door and on one of the lower panels.

38. Sgt. Liberty and this writer then checked the East side of the house and the windows but could not find where any possible entrance could be made. Upon going on to the front porch we checked the windows in this location and found a bedroom window next to the front

entrance (as seen in photos #1, #2 and #3) unlocked, but to open this window we found to be very difficult. After checking the outside and not finding any evidence which would be of help we proceeded inside the residence and while there, it was decided that some of the personnel should leave so that they could get something to eat and at this time Sgt. Liberty, this writer and Trooper Leo Blais proceeded to Police Headquarters where we were met by ID Officer Harold Baker. Upon conversing with Officer Baker, he was filled in on what had transpired and informed that we would be returning to the scene shortly.

39. At approximately 6:45 A.M. we returned to the scene where Officer Baker commenced to process the murder room and to gather evidence. While Officer Baker was working in the room I was informed by Ptl. Garrow that one Paul Robinson was outside and wished to converse with us regarding the crime. Robinson was admitted into the kitchen and on conversing with Robinson he was asked about the shed area and the placement of the waste basket. Robinson upon looking out into the shed stated that the basket in question which was tipped over and bent has been placed [sic] on the porch outside by, he, Robinson the night before the crime and this was located up against the storm door holding it in an open position. Robinson stated that he had had no chance to empty same and thus had placed it on the porch. Upon asking Robinson as to why he had used same to prop the storm door open he replied that he didn't know and had no reason what so ever. Robinson continued on to relate that the doors in this apartment are never kept locked, this includes the front entrance and the rear door and it has been the policy of the occupants never to lock the doors. Upon asking him about the front entrance and the chain locking device which was broken he replied that this has been broken for some time and has never been used.

40. Robinson was questioned further as to his activities on the previous evening and morning in question and he stated approximately the same story as given to Det. Davis and Det. Godin in a signed statement. After finishing with Robinson, Sgt. Liberty and this writer helped the ID Officer to obtain evidence and all personal papers and effects of the victim were taken, tagged and brought to Headquarters.

41. The crime scene was secured at 12:05 P.M. July 20, 1971.

Detective Sergeant Wayne Liberty's report describing the crime scene

42. July 20, 1971, complaint no. 538, in reference to to is complaint at approximately 1:45 A.M. on this date I received a call at my house from Lt. Brosseau. At that time Lt. Brosseau informed me that a homicide had taken place at 17 Brookes Avenue, Burlington, Vt. and that Lt. Beaulieu had ordered all members of the Detective Division to report to Headquarters as soon as possible.

43. I left home immediately and arrived at Headquarters at approximately 1:55 A.M. At Headquarters, I met with Lt. Beaulieu, Det. Godin and Lt. Brosseau. Lt. Brosseau at this time was giving Lt. Beaulieu what information he had thus far in regards to this complaint.

Det. Godin, Lt. Beaulieu and myself than [sic] gathered the Identification Equipment, Cameras and finger print kit and etc. and proceeded to the scene, this being 17 Brookes Ave.

44. We arrived at the scene at approximately 2:10 A.M. and. upon entering the front door I saw Ptl. Richard Garrow standing in the living room of this apartment and I observed that there were three subjects sitting on the couch. The subjects being two females and one male. Ptl. Garrow then reported that the victim was in a room which was the second door to the right as you entered the apartment.

*45. Upon going over and looking into this room I saw what appeared to be a young female body lying face up just inside the bedroom door, with her arms outstretched and her legs spread. I noted that she was nude except for some clothing that appeared to be under her. Lt. Beaulieu at this time stated that he wanted to have the room and the victim completely photographed. Det. Godin and myself proceeded to photograph the victim and the room from various angles. While photographing this room I noted that there were curtains on the floor, they appeared to have been pulled or torn from a window located at the South West corner of this room. I also noted that in the South East corner of this room that a radio was tipped over on its side. While photographing the body of the victim **I noted a cigarette butt, this later was found to be a LARK cigarette butt, which was located right next to the right arm.***

47. As Det. Godin and myself were photographing this room, Dr. Levine arrived at the scene. Dr. Levine and Lt. Beaulieu then inspected the body. It was quite evident that the victim had been severely beaten about the face.

48. A short time thereafter, State's Attorney Patrick Leahy and Trooper Leo Blais also arrived at the scene. Lt. Beaulieu then conversed with the State's Attorney and informed him of whatever information we had thus far.

49. Det. Davis upon arriving at the scene was ordered by Lt. Beaulieu to go with Det. Godin to Headquarters with the three subjects that were in the living room for the purpose of interviewing them in regards to what they knew about what had taken place in this apartment in regards to this Homicide.

50. While Dr. Levine Mr. Leahy and Lt. Beaulieu were inspecting the body, I proceeded to inspect the kitchen which is located off the bedroom where the victim was. I noted that there was a back door from the kitchen leading to a small shed. I noted at this time that the door was unlocked.

51. Upon looking through the window out into the shed I saw where a plastic waste basket had been tipped over and was bent in the middle. It appeared that this basket was bent by someone stepping on it. I also observed that the back shed door was opened and that a storm door was closed but not locked.

52. Further checking the shed I noted that on the door leading from the shed to the kitchen, on the shed side of the door, there were two spots of blood. This door was photographed to show the area with the blood.

53. While I was processing the shed, Dr. Harris arrived and conversed with Mr. Leahy, Lt. Beaulieu and Dr. Levine. After the body had been completely inspected Lt. Beaulieu, Trp. Blais and myself proceeded to gather evidence in the bedroom where the victim was found. As we gathered this evidence, it was identified by the date, time and same was signed by the officer that had picked up that particular piece of evidence and tag and evidence were placed in a plastic bag and same was sealed.

54. Upon picking up the cigarette butt that was laying on the floor next to the victim's right arm, I noted that it was a LARK cigarette butt and same was identified as above evidence. A list of the evidence gathered is in Lt. Beaulieu's report.

55. Later this same morning, this being July 20th, one of the occupants of the apartment, Mr. Paul Robinson, returned from Headquarters. At this time Lt. Beaulieu and myself sat down with Mr. Robinson and asked him several questions. One of the questions was in regards to who smoked in this apartment and what brand they smoked. Mr. Robinson informed us of the following. He stated that the victim, one Rita Curran, and her roommate, Beverly Lanpher who shared the same bedroom where the homicide took place, that neither of them to the best of his knowledge smoked. Mr. Robinson stated that Kerry Duame and himself smoked Salem, Benson & Hedges and on occasions Winston's. I asked Paul Robinson several times if he was quite certain about Rita Curran and Beverly Lanpher not smoking and he stated that he was quite certain as he never saw either one of these girls smoking a cigarette.

56. After the body had been removed by the George Ready Funeral Home, Lt. Beaulieu, Trp. Blais, Mr. Leahy and myself left the homicide scene and returned to Headquarters. Ptl. Richard Garrow was left to guard the scene.

57. When we arrived at Headquarters, we saw that ID Officer Harold Baker had arrived from Windsor and was gathering more of his equipment. At that time Lt. Beaulieu informed ID Baker that we were going to get a bite to eat and that we would all be returning to the scene.

58. Upon returning to the scene, ID Baker commenced to processing the bedroom where the homicide had taken place. After ID Baker had completed his processing in the bedroom where the victim was found, Ptl. Garrow and myself took measurement of the room while Lt. Beaulieu filled in the measurements on a rough diagram.

59. I proceeded to the cellar and I collected a sample of dirt to be compared with a sample of dirt removed from the floor of the victim's room.

60. I then assisted Lt. Beaulieu in removing a chip of wood from the door leading into the victim's room which contained a rather large spot of blood.

61. The floor of the bedroom was also processed for latent prints and a section of the linoleum on the bedroom floor which appeared to have some friction ridge on it, was cut out and removed and turned over to ID Baker. Also a section of linoleum which had what appeared to be blood on it, was cut out by Lt. Beaulieu and turned over to ID Baker.

62. When Det. Winterbottom, who had been out of town, arrived at 17 Brookes Avenue he was detailed to canvas the area and to talk to the people living on the street and check if anyone heard or saw anything during the night that would be of assistance to our investigation.

Autopsy Report for Rita Curran

63. The autopsy was conducted at the Office of Chief Medical Examiner at the Medical Alumni Building, Burlington, Vermont, by State Pathologist and Chief Medical Examiner Lawrence S. Harris, M.D., on July 20th, 1971, at 0500 hours. Dr. Harris concluded the following:

Final Pathologic Diagnoses

1. *Asphyxia by manual strangulation.*
 - (a) *Fracture of hyoid bone.*
 - (b) *Hemorrhages of the neck muscles.*
 - (c) *Multiple petechial hemorrhages of the face and neck with conjunctival hemorrhages of the eyes*
 - (d) *Multiple contusions of anterior neck.*
 - (e) *Abrasion of right anterior neck.*
2. *Recent lacerations of the vagina.*
 - (a) *Contusion of deep vaginal wall.*
3. *Multiple recent blunt impacts to face and head.*
 - (a) *Multiple facial contusions with focal edema.*
 - (b) *Lacerations (3) and abrasions (2) of face.*
 - (c) *Hemorrhages of right and left temporalis muscles.*
 - (d) *Hemorrhage of scalp.*
4. *Bilateral acute pulmonary hemorrhages.*

Toxicologic Analyses

Postmortem Blood: Ethanol: None

Carboxyhemoglobin: None

CAUSE OF DEATH: Asphyxia by manual strangulation.

MANNER OF DEATH: Homicide.

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative

64. The three roommates, Beverly Lanpher, Paul Robinson, and Kerri Duane were subsequently interviewed by Detectives Godin and Davis. It was learned that on the night of the murder, the three roommates had left the residence at different times but ultimately met at the same bar to have drinks. Kerry indicated that her boyfriend Paul picked her up at work at approximately 1930 hours. Kerry and Paul drove around for a while and then returned home to change clothes with plans to go out to dinner at "Harbor Hideaway." They left the apartment at approximately 2050 hours. While at the bar, Paul called Beverly at approximately 2315 hours to invite her to join them at Harbor Hideaway. Beverly was the last roommate to see Rita alive and she (Beverly) left the residence at approximately 2320 hours. When Beverly left, she stated that Rita was asleep in bed. Beverly met the other roommates (Paul and Kerri) at the bar. Kerri and Paul subsequently left the bar shortly after Beverly's arrival, as Paul was tired. They left the bar and arrived at home at approximately 0030 hours. Beverly left the bar a little later. When Paul and Kerri returned home, their suspicions were not aroused that anything was wrong. They did notice that the door to Rita and Beverly's room was open (approximately 12 inches). Based on this time line, it is safe to say that Rita's murder occurred between 2320 hours on July 19th and 0030 hours on July 20th. It should be noted that the roommates plan to go out this evening was not planned or a routine; it just organically occurred.

65. I found this to be a very important clue in this investigation. It meant that the suspect would have had approximately 70 minutes to discover that Rita was home alone and then commit this crime and escape before Kerri and Paul returned home. It would make it highly unlikely that this crime was the result of a random, chance encounter with the victim. It is most probable that the suspect lived in close proximity where he would have knowledge of who was home and when. He would also have known who lived at 17 Brookes Ave and what vehicles they drove. Knowing that most murder suspects are usually located in a victimology, I wanted to revisit Rita's victimology to see all males who had been identified in investigative reports, however slight, but who also lived in close proximity to the victim's address. I felt very strongly about this fact and while looking through all the police reports, I found the name of a subject who had been contacted by police at least three times (in Officer Garrow's report mentioned above and other reports to follow). This subject lived in the same building in a third floor apartment with his wife. Their address was listed as 15 Brookes Ave, but it is in the same structure as 17 Brookes Ave. This male was identified as William DeRoos. DeRoos's connection to the case was the

result of several neighborhood canvasses that were conducted by law enforcement. This subject and his wife alibied each other during those canvass contacts, stating they were home all night and did not hear anything suspicious. I also found DeRoos's name in a report written by Detectives Davis and Godin (details of that information is forthcoming in this report). DeRoos was never investigated as a person of interest or suspect. Because of his proximity to this crime, he was added to our suspect pool, along with many others, as a person to compare DNA to.

66. I assigned Detective Thomas Chenette to conduct a complete workup on DeRoos to find out everything we could about him. It should be noted that Burlington Police IDT Amy Czuhanych assisted him in this work. The following police reports contain police contacts or information about DeRoos and his wife:

Detective Armand Winterbottom's investigative work

67. Upon Detective Winterbottom's arrival at the scene, he was tasked with conducting a canvass of the immediate area to see if any of the neighbors had heard or seen anything suspicious. Detective Winterbottom made contact with a number of people in the area, but based on the current investigation into the murder of Rita Curran, there was a particular contact of interest. While at 17 Brookes Ave. he went up to the second floor apartment only to find no one home. However, he proceeded to the third floor apartment and made contact with "Mrs Michell DeRoof," who stated that she did not hear or see a thing. She told Detective Winterbottom that she did not know anything was going on until she saw the police cars and the ambulance.

68. Detective Winterbottom conducted other investigative work that is documented in his report; none of which is related to the suspect in this case. Please refer to his document for further details.

Vermont State Police Trooper Corporal Bruce F. Lahue's investigative canvass

69. On July 23, 1971 Vermont State Police Corporal Bruce F. Lahue was assisting the Burlington Police Department with this investigation. Trooper Lahue conducted another canvass and while doing so, went to 15 Brookes Ave. It should be noted that 15 Brookes Ave and 17 Brookes Ave are located in the same building, 17 Brookes Ave being the first floor apartment and 15 Brookes Ave being the 2nd and 3rd floor apartments. At the second floor apartment he was able to identify four women who resided there; Leslie Chilton, Sally Keith, Jenny Kirkpatrick, and Diane Soucy. No information was gathered from this location that was relevant to this crime. At the third floor apartment, Trooper Lahue identified two tenants: Mr. and Mrs. William DeRoos. His report stated the following: "*talked with Michele DeRoos, wife of William. Mrs. DeRoos stated that she heard and saw nothing and as far as she knew neither did her husband on the night of Monday, July, 19, 1971.*"

Burlington Police Department Detectives Dennis Godin and Donald Davis interviews

70. Detectives Godin and Davis did a number of interviews that were documented in their report. In their report, the following was documented:

“Wednesday, July 28, 1971 0900 hrs.

*WILLIAM DEROOS age 31
15 Brookes Ave, Burlington
DOB: 12-14-39 POB: Chicago IL*

Above subject’s name was brought to our attention by an informer[] who stated that the subject was capable of committing a violent crime. Subject informed us that he was home at the time of the crime with his wife but that they did not hear or see anything. Informed us that he is a farm laborer on the Palmer farm in Hinesburg.”*

*It should be noted that the informer mentioned above was never disclosed in police reports and it is not possible to obtain that information from Detectives Davis and Godin as both have passed away.

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative con’t

71. Early on in this investigation, a subject name Phillip Hill inserted himself into the investigation as a potential witness. Hill quickly became a potential suspect along with several other individuals during the 1971 investigation. The list of suspects was developed based on a number of different circumstantial facts, including past suspicious behavior, close proximity to the crime scene, tips, etc. The suspect list continued to grow as the decades continued to pass. The investigative work completed on these suspects from over the years is documented in a number of different detectives’ / officers’ reports. The investigative work done early on was important to our current investigative work; however, it was not a focal point of our efforts. Rather, we chose to focus on the forensic evidence from the scene to identify the suspect in this case, instead of relying on circumstantial evidence and statements, especially 51 years after this crime had been committed.

Former Detective, Jeff Beerworth’s investigative work

72. A big break in this case occurred in 2014 when DNA was developed from the LARK cigarette butt that was left next to Rita’s right arm. Below is the sequence of events for that process.

73. In 2014, former Detective Jeff Beerworth was working this case and identified a few pieces of evidence in the case that he decided to send to New York City Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for DNA testing. The items included (1) Lark Cigarette Butt, Nail Scrapings from Rita Curran, and Vaginal Slides from Rita Curran's Autopsy. The items were then shipped via FedEx, tracking number: #852465640784, on September 19th, 2014.

74. On October 29th, 2014, former Detective Beerworth received a report from the NYC OCME which indicated that a male DNA profile had been successfully obtained from the Lark cigarette butt that was found at the scene of the crime. The report indicated that the profile was suitable for DNA comparison and for entry into the State DNA Index System (SDIS), National DNA Index System (NDIS), and the OCME local DNA databank. Former Detective Beerworth later confirmed with Juliette Smith of the NYC OCME that their office had entered the profile into the CODIS system.

75. On 5-3-2016, former Detective Beerworth received a report from the NYC OCME indicating that (4) of the (8) vaginal slides from Rita Curran's autopsy had been tested and that there was insufficient DNA concentration for testing. It should be noted that the fingernail scrapings were not examined and the remaining evidence is being held at the NYC OCME, to include the extract from the DNA profile developed from the cigarette butt.

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative con't

76. With the known male DNA profile, a number of suspects were compared to the profile by former Detective Beerworth and by this current team. The following names were compared and ruled out either by direct comparison, CODIS exclusion, or familial comparison

Philip E. Hill
John S. Duffy
Robert Bradley
Terrence Audette (deceased)
Paul St. Laurent (deceased)
Paul Hale
Stuart Paquette
Theodore Bundy (deceased)
Greg Abajian
Norman W. Stevens
Charles Finnegan
Dennis Murphy
Raymond McKinstry

77. For the sake of thoroughness, we also compared the cigarette butt DNA to Rita's male roommate, Paul Robinson, and he was excluded. Upon reviewing initial investigating officers' reports, we were able to conclude the following first responders were at the scene prior to the first detective who discovered the cigarette butt. They were identified as:

Burlington Fire Department Ambulance workers:

David Bean
Steven Olio

Burlington Police Officers:

Richard Garrow
D. Larock

78. All were excluded from being the contributor of the DNA extracted from the cigarette butt. It should be noted that in order to do the familial DNA comparisons we had to retrieve the DNA extract from the OCME in NYC and send it to another DNA Lab for this specific testing. The extract had been frozen in storage in NYC since 2014.

79. Early on in this investigation, our immediate focus was to identify a number of items in evidence that we could re-test for DNA. Former Detective John Stoughton took on the responsibility of going through all of the physical evidence in the case. He presented his evidence findings to the team. The team decided to separate the evidence into two groups.

- Group 1- being the evidence found to be most likely to provide DNA results (clothing that was on Rita's body or had been torn off her and blood smears presumably left by suspect as he fled).
- Group 2- being items at the scene that were less likely to provide a suspect DNA profile (hair curlers, bedding, etc.). Also, we knew that the testing was going to be extremely costly and we wanted to be very careful and choose wisely.

The following items were selected for Group 1 testing:

- a) 2 blue cloth drawstrings from housecoat
- b) Piece of linoleum w/ blood smears
- c) Underpants from Rita Curran
- d) Part of nightgown
- e) Housecoat from Rita Curran
- f) Piece of wood labeled 1B and Piece of wood Labeled Q22

80. The above evidence would later be brought to a lab that was chosen by the team as our best option based on new DNA extracting techniques like the M-VAC. The lab was DNA Labs International from Florida. These items were flown to DNA Labs International and hand delivered by Detective Corporal Phil Tremblay on March 24, 2022. This is also the same lab that the cigarette butt DNA extract was sent to by IDT Czuhanych for the familial DNA comparisons mentioned above.

The results of the Group 1 testing will be outlined later in this report.

81. While working through the DNA testing of the above-mentioned items, we were also looking into contracting with a genealogy company to try and identify the source of DNA found on the cigarette butt. Up to this point, the DNA had been entered into the national database known as CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) and there was no hit, meaning our suspect had not been convicted of a felony previously or at least his DNA had not been entered into the CODIS as the result of a felonious crime. The DNA had also been compared to the 13 most likely suspects in this case and did not match any of them.

82. We researched several companies and as a group decided to contract with Parabon Nanolabs. In 2022, the cigarette butt DNA that was currently at DNA Labs International was sent to Parabon Nanolabs where it was successfully sequenced by Arbor BioSciences and subsequently submitted into Family Tree DNA and GED Match. Parabon scientist and genealogy expert, CeCe Moore, conducted the genealogy research for this case.

83. On August 11, 2022, Parabon representatives contacted us requesting a list of all the suspects that had not been previously ruled out as a contributor of the cigarette butt. Prior to sending the list to them I asked that IDT Czuhanych make sure that DeRoos be added to the list. That list was sent to Parabon and within a very short time, Parabon requested a video call with CeCe Moore. It was during this call that CeCe Moore advised us that the contributor of the cigarette butt was on our suspect list and that she was certain that it was William DeRoos and that there were genetic matches on both the maternal and paternal sides of the family. Below are the details of CeCe Moore's report:

Parabon Nanolabs Genealogy report

84. The below report is a small subsection of the total report as there are a number of innocent people that were mentioned in the total report that need to remain anonymous per our contract with Parabon. These individuals are in no way connected to this case and were only a tool to identify our suspect, therefore they will not be mentioned in this or any police report. An independent verification was later conducted using the DNA of a half-brother of our suspect.

"Parabon's Snapshot Case ID: BPD-VT-71BU000538-Snapshot1

Analyst: AIGG

Crime: Homicide of Rita Curran on 19/20 July 1971 in Burlington, VT

Conclusions

It is Parabon's hypothesis that the Subject is highly likely to be William Richard DeRoos, (14 Dec 1939 - 7 Aug 1986), the son of William Henry DeRoos (1912-2004) and Lois Lyle Orr (1913-1940). Documentation was found that shows William Richard DeRoos was a neighbor of the victim at the time of the crime.

William should be strongly considered as a candidate to be the Subject based on the fact that genealogical connections were found to all five of the Subject's top genetic matches, through both the maternal and paternal sides of his family tree and three of his grandparents' ancestral lines. Further, documentation was discovered that he resided in the same building as the victim at the time of the crime.

This is a high confidence potential identification due to the significant genetic and circumstantial evidence discovered during the investigative genetic genealogy research. The research and evidence supporting this hypothesis is detailed in Sections C and D in this report. Recommendations for confirming or refuting this theory regarding the identity of the Subject can be found in Section E.

Genealogy Research

Family trees for the top matches were constructed in hopes of making connections between the families of the matches. The trees were documented through census records, vital records, newspaper archives, public "people search" databases, public social media data and well-documented public family trees.

Included Individual: William Richard DeRoos, b. 14 Dec 1939

Based on the genetic genealogy analysis and associated research, the only known candidate who could reasonably be the Subject is William Richard DeRoos, b. 14 Dec 1939, the son of William Henry DeRoos (1912-2004) and Lois Lyle Orr (1913-1940). No one else was discovered who fit the parameters to be the Subject.

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative

85. Though the information from Parabon and CeCe Moore pointed to William DeRoos exclusively, we knew that we would need to independently compare the DNA from the cigarette butt to William DeRoos or a family member in the family tree that was as close as possible to him for verification. With help from Parabon, and with information that Detective Chenette had located, we were able to find a half-brother to William DeRoos who was still alive. The results of this testing will be described later in this report.

86. What we were able to piece together from Detective Chenette, IDT Czuhanych, and CeCe Moore research is:

87. William DeRoos DOB 12/14/1939 did in fact live at 15 Brookes Ave in Burlington. Marriage records confirm that he was married to Michelle (Roach) DeRoos July 5, 1971 in Burlington, VT, and that their address was noted as 15 Brookes Ave. It was also learned that William DeRoos was deceased and that he died of an “acute morphine poisoning” or overdose in San Francisco, CA, in 1986. Detective Chenette advised that his remains were cremated according to the medical examiners office in San Francisco and that there was no biological evidence available for DNA testing.

88. On August 24, 2022. DNA Labs International provided us with the following results from their testing on the Group 1 evidence.

DNA Labs International testing results on Group 1 Evidence

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS

The following evidence was received by this laboratory on March 24, 2022 by hand delivery. Evidence screening for laboratory activity associated with this report began on July 20, 2022:

Agency Item # DLI Item # Description

1700	22-04061	Blue cloth drawstring from housecoat
1703	22-04062	Blue cloth drawstring from housecoat
1704	22-04063	Piece of linoleum
1705	22-04064	Underpants from Rita Curran
1709	22-04065	Part of nightgown
1711	22-04066	Housecoat from Rita Curran
2362	22-04067	Piece of wood labeled 1B and piece of wood labeled Q22

NOTE: Sample description (including any reference to the identification of biological fluids) is based on documentation received from the submitting agency.

METHODS

The indication of blood, peripheral blood, menstrual blood, urine, semen and saliva utilize chemical or immunological tests; the components of the body fluid tested are not unique to that body fluid and are therefore considered presumptive. The identification of spermatozoa utilizes microscopic examination and is considered confirmatory.

The method of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis used was the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR). The real-time PCR quantitation kit used was the PowerQuant system which targets total human and total male DNA as well as assesses DNA degradation. The PCR amplification kit used was the PowerPlex Fusion DNA profiling system, which includes autosomal short tandem repeats (STRs), a Y-STR, and Amelogenin.

RESULTS/CONCLUSION

A DNA profile from a cigarette butt was provided by Vermont Forensic Laboratory for comparison. This DNA profile will be labeled as UNKNOWN#1.

A DNA profile previously obtained by Vermont Forensic Laboratory for Rita Curran was provided for comparison.

1704 22-04063 Piece of linoleum

Blood was indicated on the linoleum. A sample was collected from the staining on the linoleum for DNA analysis (DLI sample 22-04063.01). The DNA profile obtained from this sample indicates at least one female contributor. UNKNOWN#1 can be excluded as a contributor to this DNA profile. Rita Curran could not be ruled out as a possible contributor to this DNA profile.

The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 29 trillion times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran than if it originated from an unknown person. This analysis provides very strong support for the proposition that Rita Curran is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.

No analysis was performed on apparent hairs observed on this item.

1705 22-04064 Underpants from Rita Curran

A sample was collected from the exterior ripped edge of the underwear for DNA analysis (DLI sample 22-04064.01). A DNA profile foreign to Rita Curran was obtained from this sample, this foreign DNA profile indicates a mixture of at least two individuals with at least one male contributor. This foreign DNA profile was interpreted as three contributors. UNKNOWN#1 could not be ruled out as a possible contributor to this foreign DNA profile.

The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 61 times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran and UNKNOWN#1 than if it originated from Rita Curran and an unknown person. This analysis provides limited support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.

The DNA profiles of additional contributors to the mixture were not determined; however, the results are suitable for comparison.

1711 22-04066 Housecoat from Rita Curran

Blood was indicated on the housecoat. A sample was collected from the left and right edge where the item opens and closes (avoiding staining) of the housecoat (DLI sample 22-04066.01). No blood was indicated on this sample. The DNA profile obtained from this sample indicated a mixture of at least four individuals with at least one male contributor. Rita Curran and UNKNOWN#1 could not be ruled out as possible contributors to this DNA profile.

Two sets of propositions were considered:

The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 5.2 million times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons than if it originated from four unknown persons. This analysis provides very strong support for the proposition that Rita Curran is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample. If applicable to the case, it is recommended that reference standards from any first-degree relatives of Rita Curran be submitted for additional comparisons.

The DNA Profile obtained from this sample is approximately 65 thousand times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran, UNKNOWN#1, and two unknown persons than if it originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons. This analysis provides strong support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.

The DNA profiles of additional contributors to the mixture were not determined; however, the results are suitable for comparison.

An additional sample was collected from the interior lower buttock area (avoiding staining) of the housecoat, (DLI samples 22-04066.02 (SF) & 22-04066.03 (CF)). No blood was indicated on this sample. The DNA profile obtained from this sample indicates a mixture of at least three individuals with at least one male contributor. This DNA profile was interpreted as four contributors. Assuming four contributors and that Rita Curran is one of the contributors, a foreign DNA profile was obtained. UNKNOWN#1 could not be ruled out as a contributor to this foreign DNA profile.

The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 780 times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran, UNKNOWN#1, and two unknown persons than if it originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons. This analysis provides moderate support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.

The DNA profiles of additional contributors to the mixture were not determined; however, the results are suitable for comparison.

2362 22-04067 Piece of wood labeled 1B and piece of wood labeled Q22

Blood was indicated on the piece of wood labeled 1B. A sample was collected from the staining on the wood for DNA analysis (DLI sample 22-04067.01). The DNA profile obtained from this sample indicates at least one female contributor. UNKNOWN#1 can be excluded as a contributor to this DNA profile. Rita Curran could not be ruled out as a possible contributor to this DNA profile.

The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 2.0 trillion times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran than if it originated from an unknown person. This analysis provides very strong support for the proposition that Rita Curran is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.

Visual examination was conducted on the piece of wood labeled Q22; however, no further analysis was performed.

1700 22-04061 Blue cloth drawstring from housecoat

1703 22-04062 Blue cloth drawstring from housecoat

1709 22-04065 Part of nightgown

No analysis was performed on these items at this time.

DNA Labs International Likelihood Ratio chart

Verbal 'Equivalent' Likelihood Ratio

Provides very strong support $\geq 1,000,000$

Provides strong support 10,000-999,999

Provides moderate support 100-9,999

Provides limited support 2-99

Uninformative 1-1.9

REMARKS

Additional DNA comparisons can be conducted upon submission of a reference standard from a suspect and/or other individual(s) of interest.

89. A copy of the DNA Labs International report will be attached to this report for reference. It should be noted that at the time of DNA processing, the lab was not told that we had identified a suspect based on the work done by CeCe Moore and Parabon. This is why the above report refers to the cigarette butt DNA contributor as UNKNOWN #1. However, UNKNOWN #1 is William DeRoos DOB 12/14/1939.

90. To recap the above report; William DeRoos could not be ruled out as a contributor of DNA as a result of the testing done on Rita's underwear and housecoat (two different locations-the front of her housecoat that was forcibly ripped opened and inside the housecoat under where her buttocks was.). Of note is the testing results and statistical probability noted for Rita's housecoat. We know that the suspect forcefully ripped Rita's housecoat open from the front making this location a likely location for suspect DNA and the results from that testing locations indicate:

*“The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 65 thousand times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran, UNKNOWN#1, and two unknown persons than if it originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons. **This analysis provides strong support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.**”*

91. Also results from the testing of Rita's housecoat under where her buttocks was located state the following:

*“The DNA profile obtained from this sample is approximately 780 times more probable if the sample originated from Rita Curran, UNKNOWN#1, and two unknown persons than if it originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons. **This analysis provides moderate support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample.**”*

92. It should be noted that William DeRoos was ruled out as a contributor for testing done on the blood smears (Piece of wood labeled 1B and piece of wood labeled Q22 & Piece of linoleum). We believed the blood would most likely be Rita's due to the injuries she sustained and this was confirmed in the report. But we tested it in the event the suspect injured himself while assaulting Rita.

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative con't.

93. Based on the latest information we formulated a plan to conduct the following investigative steps:

- Get a DNA sample from William DeRoos' living half-brother, Douglas McGinty.
- Re-interview DeRoos's wife at the time of the murder, Michelle DeRoos (who had changed her name to Kylas Nagaarjuna)
- To conduct an interview with his third wife Sarah Hepting. Hepting was identified while conducting a background investigation on William DeRoos.

- Re-interview Rita's living former roommates, Paul Robinson and Kerry Duame, who had changed her name to Kusala Tibbetts. The purpose of these interviews were to determine if they knew William or Michelle. It should be noted that Rita's roommate Beverly Lanpher passed away while we were investigating this case.

94. Detective Chenette was assigned to make contact with Douglas McGinty to obtain a DNA sample. Mr. McGinty and his family were very helpful and did provide DNA for us to compare to William DeRoos. Mr. McGinty's DNA was sent to DNA Labs for direct comparison to the DNA profile from the Lark cigarette butt to see if that DNA reflected that its contributor was in fact the half -brother of Mr. McGinty, William DeRoos. We later received the results from DNA Labs and the additional testing indicated that the following:

“The relative probability that Doug McGinty is related to UNKNOWN#1 as a half-sibling is 97.03 % in the general population. These results support the conclusion that Doug McGinty and UNKNOWN#1 are half-siblings.”

95. Detectives Chenette and Tremblay were assigned to interview William DeRoos' ex-wives, Michelle DeRoos, AKA Kylas Nagaarjuna, and Sarah Hepting. Both of these women lived in other states and travel arraignments and dates and times were set up. Detectives Chenette and Tremblay conducted recorded interviews with Hepting and Nagaarjuna. They completed investigative reports regarding same. Below is what Detective Tremblay wrote about his interview with Michelle DeRoos, AKA Kylas Nagaarjuna:

Detective Tremblay Interview with Michelle DeRoos (AKA Kylas Nagaarjuna)

96. *“On September 27, 2022, at approximately 1311 hours, Detective Chenette and I met with Kylas Nagaarjuna (AKA Michelle Roach) at the Eugene, Oregon, Police Department. Kylas arrived on her own freewill based on a predetermined meeting time she arranged with Detective Chenette. It should be noted that Kylas had previously changed her name from Michelle Roach, and that her name was Michelle Roach at the time of the murder in 1971. For ease of reading, she will be referred to as Kylas for this report.*

97. *The conversation between Detective Chenette, Kylas, and me was audio recorded.*

98. *Throughout our interview, Kylas advised that her memory of exact timelines was not always going to be accurate in that the incident took place over 50 years prior. Kylas' timeline was based on approximate estimations.*

99. *Kylas advised that she grew up in Woodstock, NY, and went to Nursing School at Hunter College in New York City where she received a Bachelor's Degree approximately in 1969. Kylas stated that she began working as a public health nurse in Boston for a while before going out to San Francisco, CA. Kylas said that she met “Bill DeRoos” at the Zen Center in San Francisco in approximately 1970.*

100. Kylas advised that she lived with DeRoos in two separate apartments in San Francisco, with one being near the Zen Center, and the other being in Chinatown. She stated they began dating and were both into the "Buddhist scene." Kylas described DeRoos as a tall man, who was approximately 7 years older than her, greenish colored eyes, a great storyteller, and missing a portion of his left pinky finger. Kylas stated that she never met any of DeRoos' family, but that he stated he was 1 of 7 boys and that his Mother was an avid horse rider. She didn't recall DeRoos ever mentioning his Father. Kylas recalled DeRoos telling her that he had been to prison twice in California, once for Armed Robbery where he served 2-3 years of jail time. Kylas stated that DeRoos never brought up being in the armed services.

101. Kylas could not recall any previous employment for DeRoos, but stated that he had told her that he dreamed of opening his own barbershop. Kylas also believed that DeRoos had been married previously to a woman from South America, possibly Argentina, but Kylas had never met her.

102. Kylas said that her ties to Burlington, VT, came from her family moving there in approximately 1965 or 1966. She stated her Father was the plant manager at IBM and that she remembered them living in a yellow colored house located at 500 South Willard St, Burlington, VT.

103. Kylas advised that she broke up with DeRoos while still in San Francisco, but couldn't recall the details as to why. She stated that she did not feel afraid of DeRoos, as he had never been physically abusive toward her. She also said that DeRoos did not drink alcohol or use drugs, as he was a "serious Buddhist."

104. Kylas stated that she moved to Burlington and into her parents' house during the spring of 1971. She advised that DeRoos came out to Burlington a few months after. Kylas stated that he showed up unexpectedly, but could not recall the specific details. She stated that her parents met DeRoos and were "not thrilled" about her dating him. Kylas said that her parents ended up moving to Knowlton, British Columbia, a short time later and that is when she and DeRoos moved to the apartment on Brookes Ave in Burlington, VT. Detective Chenette showed Kylas a photograph of 17 Brookes Ave and she recognized it as the apartment they lived in, specifically she recalled needing to walk up stairs to access their apartment. She recalled there being a slanted ceiling, a bed by the window, kitchen on the opposite side, and it being an undivided "studio" space, with a bathroom in a separate area.

105. Kylas stated that she and DeRoos were married, which was determined to be on July 5, 1971 in Burlington, VT, based on their marriage license.

106. Kylas stated that she did not recall knowing any of the neighbors at the apartment or going to any parties. She recalled hanging out with her brother and his friends mostly, and did not really interact with the neighbors. She stated that she could not recall her or DeRoos ever being

in any of the other apartments under any circumstance. Kylas believed that DeRoos had some sort of dishwashing job at the time and believed it to be a daytime job as she recalled sleeping in the same bed together. She recalled that she was not working because DeRoos did not want her to work, but instead wanted her to be pregnant. Kylas specifically recalled DeRoos putting a nail through a diaphragm and hanging it above the front door to indicate how serious he was about having kids. Kylas reiterated that DeRoos stated his dream was to open up a barbershop in Burlington and have a family, including children, with her.

107. *Kylas was then shown a photograph of Rita Curran prior to the incident. Kylas advised that she was beautiful but did not recognize her.*

108. *We then discussed what Kylas recalled on the morning after the murder. She stated that she remembered Police coming to her door and stating that someone “had been hurt pretty bad.” Kylas recalled having to get out of bed to answer the door when Police arrived. After Police left, she stated that DeRoos told her not to mention that he was not at home at the suspected time of the murder. DeRoos told her that because he had a previous criminal record, that the Police would try to accuse him of it.*

109. *Kylas stated that on the night of the murder, she and DeRoos got into a “quarrel,” though she could not recall what it was in regards to. In response to the quarrel, she stated that DeRoos went for a “cool down walk” and left the apartment. She stated that she may have gone to bed, and wasn’t sure how long DeRoos was gone for. She advised that she remembered sleeping in the same bed as him that night and couldn’t recall if they had sex that evening or not. Kylas didn’t recall anything out of the ordinary, such as wounds, scrapes, etc. on DeRoos or him acting any differently. She stated that if she saw something indicating that DeRoos had been involved she would have “quietly gone to Police.”*

110. *Kylas advised that she could not recall what DeRoos was wearing that evening and wouldn’t know if he had disposed of any clothes. Kylas did not believe that they had a washer/dryer in their apartment but couldn’t recall where they normally did laundry.*

111. *Kylas could not recall specifics regarding her follow-up interview with Police, but stated that she probably would have “covered” for DeRoos based on their previous conversation about his criminal record being motive for Police to accuse him. Kylas stated that the thought crossed her mind that DeRoos could have committed the murder, but said that it was “inconceivable” because he would have no reason to do that. She advised that she never directly asked DeRoos if he committed the murder.*

112. *Kylas stated that DeRoos smoked cigarettes but she did not. She could not recall what brand specifically DeRoos would have smoked and the brand of Lark cigarettes didn’t mean anything to her.*

113. *Kylas stated that DeRoos moved to Thailand a short time after the incident, but could not recall exactly when that was. She stated that she and DeRoos had an understanding that she would also move to Thailand sometime in the future. When asked why they didn't travel together as they were recently married Kylas seemed confused and stated she didn't know. She repeated, "why didn't we go together," then suggested maybe it was because they only had enough money for one of them to go.*

114. *Kylas stated she thought she briefly moved to another apartment in Burlington following the murder, and she started working as a nurse out of necessity because she needed a source of money.*

115. *Kylas believed she arrived to Thailand in March 1972, and that DeRoos was a monk at that time. She stated that DeRoos "disrobed" (lost his status as monk) and they traveled Thailand for a couple weeks. She stated that they returned and DeRoos once again became a monk, with her becoming a nun. She stated that they never had much of a relationship after that because it was against the rules.*

116. *Kylas stated she stayed in Thailand for approximately a year and a half. Prior to her leaving, she said that DeRoos left Thailand and went to another county, but she could not recall which one. She stated that DeRoos approached her with his plan to leave and asked her for money to finance his trip without inviting her along. She stated she refused to provide him any money and that was the last time she saw him or communicated with him in any way. Kylas advised that she never even got a divorce signature from him but instead had to go through a lawyer to get an official divorce.*

117. *Kylas again reiterated that she couldn't recall ever having a conversation with anyone in the household at Brookes Ave, let alone go into any of the other apartments. Kylas stated, "we had no relations with those people. Why would he do that? Never asked for a cup of sugar, nothing."*

118. *Kylas became very emotional towards the end of our conversation but provided photographs of both herself and DeRoos from the time that they were together. With Kylas' permission, I took photographs of the physical photographs that she had brought to the interview.*

119. *This concluded our interview with Kylas."*

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative con't.

120. Following the interview with Michelle DeRoos, AKA Kylas Nagaarjuna, Detectives Tremblay and Chenette flew to Colorado to interview Sarah Hepting. Below is what Detective Tremblay wrote about their interview with her:

Detective Tremblay Interview with Sarah Hepting

121. *“On September 29, 2022 at approximately 2016 hours, Detective Chenette and I met with Sarah Hepting and her husband, Jim, at a predetermined restaurant of her choosing outside of Denver, Colorado. Sarah was identified as a previous wife of DeRoos, with marriage records showing them married in San Francisco, CA, on 11/19/1974. Her previous name was Sarah Bowling Edmunds. Our conversation was audio recorded.*

122. *Sarah advised that she was born in Washington D.C. and that her Father was in the Air Force so she and her family moved around quite a bit. She stated that she attended St Andrews College in North Carolina, and approximately during her junior year she started doing the “hippy thing.” Sarah stated that she moved to Boulder, CO, in 1974 and further intensified her “hippy lifestyle” before getting a ride to San Francisco in July of 1974.*

123. *Sarah recalled living in a “Zen flat” which was located just two blocks from the “Zen Center” in San Francisco. Sarah said that she met DeRoos at the flat and advised she knew him by a nickname he went by, “Dutch.” Sarah described DeRoos as approximately 6’00 tall, slender, short auburn brown hair, and recalled him commonly wearing a hat. When asked, Sarah stated that DeRoos may have been missing a finger but wasn’t sure. She stated that DeRoos lived on the same floor at the flat as her and showed an interest in her, requesting to spend one-on-one time together. She advised they had common interests such as meditation and bicycle riding. DeRoos told her about being previously married and traveling to Thailand but never explained why he left Thailand. She advised that DeRoos never brought up other family or if he had any kids, and could not recall if he brought up being in the armed forces.*

124. *Sarah stated that she and DeRoos were married in October or November of 1974 (as previously mentioned they were married on 11/19/1974). She stated that she was very insecure at the time and that they never established their relationship and if they were exclusive.*

125. *Sarah advised that DeRoos was fairly mild mannered typically, but that there were a couple instances that were concerning to her. She described living with DeRoos and having a mutual friend, “Ophelia,” visiting them. Sarah said that while all three of them were seated and talking amongst each other, DeRoos pulled out a large pocket knife that he typically carried on him. Sarah said that without provocation, DeRoos stabbed Ophelia in the side and demonstrated a poking motion. Sarah stated that they had been talking normally and were not in any kind of argument so she was not sure what caused the outburst. Sarah advised that Ophelia went to the Hospital and that she wasn’t aware of anyone calling the Police regarding the incident. Police did arrive to their apartment though, and DeRoos was arrested. Sarah recalled him leaving in a Police car and she assumed he went to jail that night.*

126. Sarah advised that DeRoos returned to their apartment the next day and acted as if nothing had happened. She stated that DeRoos inquired if he had stabbed her (Sarah) and she informed him that he had stabbed Ophelia. She said that DeRoos then went about his business, they never discussed the incident any further and that he didn't seem to show any remorse for what had happened.

127. Sarah also recalled an incident in which DeRoos had strangled her to the point where she nearly lost consciousness. She stated that the two of them were drinking and she could not recall a specific disagreement, but stated that DeRoos would often go on "rants" and she wouldn't talk back to him. Sarah stated that she never really stood up for herself and felt very insecure within the relationship. She advised on this particular occasion, DeRoos became physically abusive, using both of his hands to strangle Sarah.

128. Sarah stated that DeRoos purchased an AR-15 firearm during a camping trip possibly in 1976. She believed this occurred in Sacramento. Sarah stated that she believed DeRoos was arrested by "the Feds" for the purchase and was gone 5-7 days, during which she believed him to be in jail. She reiterated that DeRoos once again did not really discuss the incident after returning.

129. Sarah advised that DeRoos never mentioned specifics about living in Vermont, and she couldn't recall if he ever brought it up at all.

130. Sarah further described DeRoos as a "guru" and that he was a very influential speaker. She advised that he had a "power over people. Mental hypnosis almost." She described herself as a "lost hippy" who was under his influence. Sarah recalled DeRoos smoking cigarettes but could not recall what brand. She stated he also used cocaine occasionally and possibly intravenous drugs, but then stated that they really didn't have any money for hard drugs. She stated that DeRoos drank alcohol heavily and believed he took Thorazine.

131. Sarah described further travel throughout California with DeRoos after they were married. She stated that they moved into multiple apartments together, and got a car at one point, which she described as a beige-colored Plymouth Duster. She advised that neither she nor DeRoos were working at the time, and were living off welfare and SSI. Sarah advised that she and DeRoos traveled from Sacramento, CA, to Eureka, CA, and stayed at the Triangle Motel for approximately six months. Sarah advised that one day she went out for a bike ride and when she returned she found DeRoos in bed with another woman. She believed this was in June/July of 1978. She stated she left that day without DeRoos.

132. Sarah stated she began seeing a new man in approximately September of 1978 and was living with him around that time. She advised that one day DeRoos showed up at their house without notice. She stated that he was not confrontational but described him as acting "weird." Sarah said DeRoos stayed for less than a day and then left and she did not see him again. She

described feeling uneasy about DeRoos showing up because she did not know how he got information related to where she was living.

133. *This concluded our interview with Sarah.”*

Detective Lieutenant Trieb Narrative con't.

134. Detectives Tremblay and Chenette also re-interviewed the two surviving roommates (Kerry and Paul) to see if they knew William DeRoos or Michelle DeRoos or if there was a time when either of them had been in their (Rita, Beverly, Paul or Kerry's) apartment. Neither Kerry nor Paul had any real recollection of the couple, other than in passing and they confirmed that neither William nor Michelle had been in their apartment. Please refer to Detectives Tremblay and Chenette's reports for exact details of their interview.

CONCLUSION

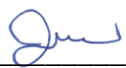
135. The Burlington Police Department's Detective Service Bureau is unanimously certain that the sole perpetrator responsible for the aggravated murder of Rita Patricia Curran DOB 06-21-47 on July 19/20th in 1971 at 17 Brookes Ave in Burlington, VT, was William DeRoos 12/14/1939 of 15 Brookes Ave in Burlington, VT. Below is the fact pattern that supports this conclusion:

- Rita had been left home alone, while sleeping, for approximately 70 minutes, making it highly likely that the suspect lived very close to Rita and would have known who was home and when.
- William DeRoos was living in the third floor apartment (15 Brookes Ave) with his wife Michelle DeRoos (later changed her name to Kylas Nagaarjuna) at the time of the murder. They had only been living at this address for a couple of months prior to the murder.
- It was later learned from Michelle DeRoos that on the night of the murder she and William had gotten into an argument and that William had left the residence and did not have an alibi around the time of the murder.
- Michelle had indicated that prior to the murder, she and William had a life plan that consisted of them having a child and William becoming a barber. She advised that William was excited about the future plan.

- The morning of the murder (July 20, 1971) is when Michelle learned of the murder because a police officer came to their door inquiring if they had heard or seen anything. The officer was told that they were both home all night and did not hear or see anything. Michelle indicated that upon the officer leaving, William told her that if the police were to come back that she was not to tell them that he had not been home last night because “they would go after him” because he had a criminal history.
- Michelle stated that after the murder, sometime in the fall of 1971, William left to go to Thailand without her to become a Buddhist monk. Michelle would eventually go to Thailand in March of 1972. Their relationship ended shortly after. Michelle never saw him again.
- Michelle confirmed that William DeRoos was a smoker and that he smoked in their Burlington apartment. She was a non-smoker.
- The Lark cigarette butt that was found next to the right arm of Rita’s murdered body had a male DNA profile that was linked to William DeRoos 12/14/1939. This cigarette butt was unique in the sense that it was not crushed, smooshed or butted out. It had burned out there at the scene, as there was ash located on the floor between her body and her right arm. The end of the cigarette butt had jagged paper that was consistent with a cigarette that had burned out on its own.
- Additional DNA analysis on Rita’s red and white polka dot house coat produced a DNA mixture of at least four individuals with one of them being a male. This sample was collected from the lapels of the house coat that we know the suspect forcefully ripped open. The results of that testing indicated that it was 65 thousand times more likely that the combination originated from Rita Curran, UNKNOWN#1, and two unknown persons than if it originated from Rita Curran and three unknown persons. This analysis provides strong support for the proposition that UNKNOWN#1 is a contributor to the DNA profile obtained from this sample. UNKNOWN#1 is the DNA recovered from the cigarette butt, which is from William DeRoos.
- Though Michelle DeRoos stated that William had never been violent with her, his next wife, Sarah Hepting, was able to establish that he did have a propensity for violence, describing two incidents at which she was present. The first was an unprovoked incident where William stabbed a friend of theirs for no apparent reason. Hepting believed that William was arrested for this incident, but we are stilling trying to confirm and are finding it difficult owing to the date of this incident (possibly in 1974). Hepting also stated that on one occasion William had strangled her to the point she nearly lost consciousness and again this was unprovoked.

- Statements from Rita's roommates, Paul and Kerry, and from Michelle (DeRoos's former wife) all established that William had no reason to be present in Rita's apartment, let alone in her bedroom, as they did not know each other.

136. Based on these facts and others, the Burlington Police Department will be closing this investigation. William DeRoos died in 1986 of a drug overdose and will not be held criminally responsible as a result.

Signed:  # 251
Lieutenant J. T Trieb #251

Date: Wednesday, February 1, 2023

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