

**January 19, 2007 - Cold Case Podcast**  
**Gail Stewart/Jeff Dusek**

Hello I'm Gail Stewart Special Assistant to District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. Welcome to the DA podcast. One of the first actions District Attorney Dumanis took as a new DA was to form a Cold Case Homicide Division to help solve the more than 2000 unsolved murders in San Diego County. Leading this division is Chief Jeff Dusek. Welcome Jeff. Today's cold case podcast may trigger some memories for long time San Diego residents; the murder of Rickie Ann Blake. Jeff, please give us a brief synopsis of what happened to this young girl.

Jeff: Rickie Blake was one of the first cases we handled here in Cold Case Homicide. Back in 1986, 14 year old Rickie Blake was taken out of her home and not found for 24 hours. She was at home watching the Padres on T.V. Her parents went to bed, her sister went bed and she was there watching the Padres. When the parents got up the next morning, she was gone. The only thing behind were her shoes. She was found later that night beaten, strangled and sexually assaulted on a freeway off-ramp.

Gail: The Cold Case Division basically has a system of how it chooses which cases to follow up on. Explain to us why Rickie Anne Blake was chosen.

Jeff: Our system involves trying to read as many unsolved murder cases as we can find. We all read them here, both

the attorneys and the investigators. After reading them we try to give them a rating system, one through five, and we obviously try to pick the case we think we have the greatest chance of solving. Rickie Blake actually was brought to us by the Police Department. San Diego Police Department when they already had a DNA hit. So, we got this one in mid-stream. This was not a case that we actively worked. The Police Department solved this one.

Gail: In this case though there was an interesting twist in that one suspect actually was standing out to our office and we were getting ready to prosecute him.

Jeff: That's true. Rickie Blake was a 14 year old girl who was scared of the dark. She would not go outside on her own. So the belief was somebody close to her, somebody she knew was the one who took her. As a result, law enforcement canvassed the neighborhood and looked at all sorts of neighbors, family and friends.

One of the neighbors became an apparent suspect early on. He behaved suspiciously; he was walking around in his house nude. He taught at a church program down in South Bay, Rickie attended that. We got some DNA from him and the early DNA test matched what we found on Rickie Blake. Fortunately, as DNA progressed, we did further DNA tests that checked more markers on this man and he was excluded. We came very close to filing charges on this man and it turned out the further work that we did excluded him.

Gail: So the actual solution to the Rickie Ann Blake stands with the DNA.

Jeff: DNA solved this case. There is no way we would have found this suspect without DNA. He was totally unknown to law enforcement.

Gail: He had never been interviewed?

Jeff: He had never been interviewed on this case. A week after he assaulted and killed Rickie Blake, he raped a mother and her six year old child in the same area. He pled guilty to that, received a 17 year sentence and went off on his way. We did not have his DNA then, we only got after he got out of prison on that case.

Gail: DNA. We see CSI, Cold Case Homicide. How significant has DNA actually become for our office and prosecution offices throughout the state and the nation?

Jeff: DNA is a Godsend. It takes away virtually all the challenge on all these criminal case. If we have DNA we've got the guy in good shape. The cases we're handling here, about half of them are solved because of DNA and about half are solved because of old fashion police work; re-interviewing people and trying to solve cases that way.

Gail: On some of the cases we have solved, police agencies, you work very closely with those agencies.

Jeff: Yes, we try to work hand in hand with the law enforcement agencies throughout the county and I think we're very successful with that.

Gail: What was the final outcome of the Rickie Ann Blake case?

Jeff: We found the suspect back in Indiana after he had molested a male cousin and was prosecuted. We returned him to San Diego; he was convicted of first degree murder with special circumstances and received the death penalty.

Gail: And he awaits the death penalty?

Jeff: He's in San Quentin awaiting the death penalty and also awaiting his appeals.

Gail: Thank you very much Jeff. If you have information about an unsolved murder in San Diego County, please contact the Cold Case Division at the Office of the District Attorney area code (619) 531-3374.

Remember, the statute of limitations for the crime of murder never runs out. No matter how much time passes, a killer can always be brought to justice. Please join us again on the DA's Podcast as we discuss Cold Case Homicide cases and what leads our prosecutors to the killers. I'm Special Assistant Gail Stewart and thank you for listening. For more information about the DA's office and services we provide please visit our website at [www.sandiegoda.com](http://www.sandiegoda.com). Thank you and goodbye.