



# WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

WCSO Case # 85-6094

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### 1985 Remains identified as those of Missing Teenager Angela Girdner

#### Summary of Event:

In October of 2009, the remains of Angela Marie Girdner were identified by the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office. Her remains had been discovered in April of 1985 in Washington County. Angela had been missing from Portland since May of 1983 when her parents reported her as runaway. Detectives believe that Angela may be a victim of serial killer Gary Ridgway, who is serving 48 consecutive life sentences in Washington.

#### Details of Event:

Angela Marie Girdner was 16 years old when she was reported as a missing person by her parents in May of 1983. She had been a straight-A student at St. Mary's of the Valley Catholic High School in Beaverton until she met the wrong people during the last year of her life. Angela rode the bus from north Portland to Beaverton for school each day. Her parents believe it was on the bus line where Angela first encountered the people who turned her life upside-down with drugs and eventually prostitution. The last time they heard from Angela was in July of 1983 when she called and told her mother that she was okay, but did not say where she was at that time.

Angela was killed sometime between when she called her mother in 1983 and early in 1985. Her skeletal remains were discovered April 22, 1985, in a wooded area along SW Tualatin Road across from the Tualatin Country Club. Hers was one of two bodies discovered by people walking in the area, and one of four bodies that were discovered within a mile of each other in 1985.

At the time Angela's remains were discovered, Washington County Sheriff's Detectives were unable to identify her or the other body found. Both bodies were badly decomposed and there were only small traces of clothing discovered with them. In 1998, the remains discovered with Angela's were identified as Tammie Liles who was born on May 9, 1967. Tammie was last seen in Seattle working as a prostitute in June of 1983. She was eventually reported missing by her family in March of 1988, which led to her identification through dental records.

In June of 1985, two months after the discovery of Angela's and Tammie's remains, two more sets of skeletal remains were found off of SW Bull Mountain Road near SW 142<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Detectives recognized the similarities with the Seattle area's Green River killings that were predominant in the

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news at the time. They contacted the King County Sheriff's Office Green River Task Force, who eventually identified the two bodies found on Bull Mountain as those of Shirley Shirell, born January 16, 1964, and Denise Bush, born June 10, 1959. Both were known prostitutes in the Seattle area and both were listed as missing persons.

In the years that followed, the unidentified remains of Angela Girdner were sent to the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office, who sent them to the King County Medical Examiner's Office for possible identification. King County was unable to identify Angela, so her remains were sent back to the Oregon State Medical Examiners Office. Unfortunately, somewhere in the transfer process they were misplaced. Earlier this year, Angela's remains resurfaced at the Clackamas County Medical Examiner's Office. They realized the bones did not belong to any of their cases. The Clackamas County Medical Examiner's Office sent the remains back to the Oregon State Medical Examiners Office, who then notified the Washington County Sheriff's Office that the unidentified bones were in their possession.

Sheriff's Detectives met with representatives from the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office and asked that dental records from missing persons in that area be compared once again to the remains. Based on the investigation conducted over the years, Angela's remains were compared to the dental records her dentist had submitted in 1985. They matched.

Angela Girdner's parents were notified by detectives that their daughter, who had been missing for over 26 years, had been identified.

In 2001, Gary Ridgway was arrested in King County, Washington, for the murder of five women. He later pled guilty to the murders of 48 women, including Shirley Shirell and Denise Bush. Ridgway claimed that he killed the women in King County and later transported the bodies to Oregon. Shirley, Denise, and Tammie were all reported missing from the Seattle area. Angela was reported missing from the Portland area and detectives have not received any information that she was in the Seattle area prior to her death.

Because of the close proximity of Tammie's and Angela's remains to the remains of Shirley and Denise, the location where their bodies were disposed of, and the time frame of the murders, detectives believe that Gary Ridgway is responsible for their deaths. He has denied any involvement in the deaths of Angela Girdner or Tammie Liles.

Detectives are revisiting the murders of Angela Girdner and Tammie Liles and are going through all the evidence that has been collected over the years. They are asking anyone with information about either victim during the years 1983, 1984, or 1985 to please call the Washington County Sheriff's Office at 503-846-2500.