

# 2001 New Bedford cold case homicide indictment announcement

A 53-year-old SouthCoast man has been indicted for the previously unsolved 2001 cold case homicide of his half-sister, Rose Marie Moniz, in New Bedford, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III.

David Reed, a former Acushnet and New Bedford man, was indicted last week by a Bristol County Grand Jury on charges of murder and armed robbery. The defendant was also indicted in September in connection to a 2003 attempted murder and robbery of another New Bedford woman, Maribel Martinez-Alegria. The indictments were returned as a result of an extensive re-examination of evidence in the case by District Attorney Quinn's Cold Case Unit.

"I'm pleased to announce the indictments related to the previously unsolved cold case homicide of Rose Marie Moniz. She was a mother who was brutally murdered inside the sanctity of her own home. Thanks to the efforts of my Cold Case Unit, along with detectives from our state police unit and New Bedford Police, we were able to bring some sense of relief to the victim's family, all of whom suffered for the past 20 years from not knowing what happened to Ms. Moniz," District Attorney Quinn said. "This case highlights what we are doing in regards to Cold Case homicides and rapes in our effort to bring justice to the families of victims and the entire community. We will continue to utilize all available resources to review cold cases and seek out new evidence. We look forward to prosecuting this case in open court."

On the morning of March 23, 2001, the 41-year-old homicide victim's father entered her home at 3448 Acushnet Avenue to

take her to a previously scheduled doctor's appointment. Upon entry into the home, the father found numerous kitchen items strewn all over the floor and the contents of his daughter's purse on the living room floor. After calling out for his daughter and receiving no reply, he eventually found her lifeless body in a large pool of blood on the bathroom floor. The father, who would later say he was never able to get that horrific picture of his daughter out of his mind, immediately contacted New Bedford Police and an investigation ensued.

It was determined that Ms. Moniz had been bludgeoned to death with a fireplace poker, a conch shell and a cast iron kettle. Her purse was emptied out on the floor and an undetermined amount of cash was stolen. The autopsy report described significant trauma to her head including skull fractures, gaping lacerations and other injuries that resulted in bleeding from both ears, broken nasal bones; and a broken left cheek bone. The medical examiner also noted multiple contusions resulting from blunt trauma all over her body. Police noted that there was no sign of forced entry into the home.

After investigators excluded two potential suspects early on in the investigation, the case went cold. In 2019, investigators from District Attorney Quinn's Cold Case Unit, who were reviewing more than 70 Bristol County cold case homicides dating back to the 1970s, began to pore over evidence and reports from the Moniz slaying. Cold Case Unit investigators reviewed the circumstances of how the conch shell was used in the bludgeoning and killing of Ms. Moniz. Autopsy photos of the victim's face showed that the victim had suffered numerous abrasions and contusions which suggested that the spiny exterior of the conch shell made contact with the victim's face.

That suggested that the perpetrator would have to put his fingers inside the opening of the conch to hold it as firmly as was needed to strike the victim with extreme force. At the

request of our office, the crime lab tested the inner areas of the shell, where one's fingers could reach. This testing revealed a full DNA profile. This profile was then entered into CODIS and hit to David Reed, the victim's half-brother. Testing of samples from underneath the victim's fingernails also determined that Y-STR DNA from the defendant's male family tree was found. Y-STR DNA technology is used as an investigatory tool.

In late August 2020 a Massachusetts State Police detective assigned to the district attorney's office and a New Bedford Police Detective attempted to interview the defendant at his residence on Milton Street in Dartmouth, where he was living with his cousin. After the brief interview, the defendant immediately began making plans to flee the state. The defendant initially fled to Alabama and began working at a lumber yard, but fled again once law enforcement came to his workplace to speak with him about this case. During the next year, the defendant travelled to California, Hawaii, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island in an apparent attempt to elude authorities. He was captured on September 10, 2021 sleeping at the Providence Rescue Mission shelter in Rhode Island. At that time, he had just been indicted in Bristol County on charges of Armed Assault with Intent to Murder and Armed Robbery in connection to the 2003 beating and robbery of Maribel Martinez-Alegria in New Bedford.

The assault of Ms. Alegria occurred in New Bedford on June 10, 2003. On that date, at approximately 10:45 PM, a citizen was inside his apartment located on Emma Street in New Bedford when he heard a female screaming for help. The screams he heard were coming from the direction of the Oceanside Plaza which is a short distance down a hill from Emma Street. When he opened the door to get a better look, the citizen saw the victim and noticed that she was covered in blood. The victim had been bludgeoned in the head with a tire iron and pretended to be dead before the assailant left the area. The victim

described to police how the perpetrator of this assault had taken her to a secluded area in his truck, where he beat her with a tire iron before pushing her out of his truck and leaving her bleeding from the head in the dark, isolated alley. After the assault, the suspect stole her pocketbook.

On July 31, 2003, the victim was at her home at on Durfee Street when she saw the man who had attacked her and robbed her of her pocketbook circling her neighborhood in his truck. When she saw him on that date, she immediately told other family members and attempted to call a detective who was involved in her case. While she was doing that, her nephew observed the truck drive by her house a second time. At that time, her nephew and five others individuals jumped into their minivan to follow the suspect's truck. As they got into the minivan, the suspect drove by the home a third time allowing them to catch up to the truck. The nephew later told police that the suspect became nervous as the minivan began to follow him and attempted to lose them. While attempting to do this, the suspect's truck struck a parked vehicle but continued to drive away in an attempt to lose them. As the minivan followed, the occupants were able to get a police officer's attention as they followed the pickup by the New Bedford High School.

A sergeant with the New Bedford Police Department observed the vehicles, called in their location and requested assistance. As a result, other cruisers were dispatched to the area of New Bedford High School to assist in stopping the pickup truck. Officer Alan Faber was approaching from the other direction in a marked cruiser with his lights on when the suspect attempted to avoid being stopped at the intersection of Hillman Street and Rockdale Avenue. The suspect attempted to avoid apprehension by crashing his pickup truck head-on into Officer Faber's cruiser causing it significant damage and injuring the officer. Even after the crash, the suspect attempted to use his truck in an attempt to push the cruiser out of the way to

facilitate his escape. Other responding officers arrived within moments of the crash and were able to apprehend the suspect. After apprehending David Reed, police brought the victim to the scene of the crash where she identified the truck and the defendant as her attacker.

The defendant was charged at the time with both the robbery and assault of the victim, and the incident involving the ramming of the police cruiser. He was released on bail. The case was scheduled for a jury trial on June 10, 2004. On that date, the defendant never appeared. He had already fled the state of Massachusetts and lived in Florida and Hawaii before moving to Alabama where he remained on the lam for almost 10 years. Reed remained a fugitive from May of 2004 until he was finally apprehended and renditioned back to Massachusetts 11 years later on May 7, 2015. Unfortunately, Ms. Alegria had died in Boston just six months prior to his 2015 arrest. The charges related to her assault and robbery were dismissed without prejudice to the Commonwealth on March 25, 2016 because there was insufficient evidence at that time on which the Commonwealth could proceed to trial.

Although prosecutors could not go forward on those charges at that time, Reed was held on an indictment for felony bail jumping and still had the pending District Court charges related to his attempt to flee from police and the resulting police cruiser crash. In 2016, he was sentenced to serve 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 years in state prison on those charges. As a result of these convictions, Reed was also required to submit a sample of his DNA to the state DNA database. It was this submission of his DNA that ultimately would connect Reed to the murder of his half-sister, as this sample would ultimately be uploaded to CODIS and matched to the DNA profile recovered from inside of the conch shell years later. Investigators have recently been able to obtain further evidence connected to the 2003 violent assault and robbery of Ms. Alegria, which resulted in the defendant's renewed indictment connected to that incident.

The defendant is currently being held in jail in connection to the alleged assault and robbery of Ms. Alegria. The Fall River Superior Court has yet to schedule an arraignment date for the new murder indictment. The cases will be prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney William McCauley, who heads up District Attorney Quinn's Cold Case Unit.

All the information contained in this press release are allegations at this time. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Although some of the work of law enforcement slowed last year in response to COVID-19, the Bristol County District Attorney's Office continued to press forward on many fronts, including unsolved cases. Unsolved homicides are of particular importance to District Attorney Quinn because of their importance to victims' families, the community, and law enforcement. The Cold Case Unit is dedicated to identifying the perpetrators of homicides, sexual assaults and other serious violent crimes. Lieutenant Ann Marie Robertson of the Massachusetts State Police Unresolved Crimes Unit works with the Bristol County District Attorney's Office and is assigned full-time to investigate these cases. The District Attorney has committed two prosecutors as well as administrative staff and a victim witness advocate to this specialized unit.

During the past two years, this office has been highlighting numerous cold case homicides in local and regional media.

Despite the pandemic, the Bristol District Attorney's Office Unsolved Unit has remained very active as it continues to review every unsolved homicide that has occurred in Bristol County since 1974. In each case, a thorough examination of all reports, witness statements, and physical evidence is undertaken. Despite prior efforts to solve these cases, dramatic developments in scientific and forensic technology have provided new avenues for investigators to pursue. The rapidly developing field of genetic genealogy (combining DNA

analysis with genealogy) and Y-STR DNA now allows previously unknown perpetrators of many serious violent crimes to be identified. This same technology used to identify the Golden State Killer in California was recently used by the Bristol District Attorney's Office and led to the arrest of Ivan Keith for a series of unsolved rapes that occurred in Bristol, Plymouth, and Norfolk counties in the 1990s. Mr. Keith had evaded being identified and apprehended for more than 20 years, but as a result of this technology, he was arrested in Maine where he was living under a false name. He has since been convicted of all the rapes and is serving a 50 year state prison sentence.

Our Cold Case Unit, during the past year, has also publicly identified the now-deceased former Providence Mafia enforcer connected to two previously unsolved homicide cases from the 1980s and 1990s. Kevin Hanrahan was publicly identified in May 2021 as one of the men responsible for the August 1991 slaying of Howard Ferrini, 53, of Berkley. Hanrahan was also publicly identified in April 2021 as the individual who forced John Gomes, 58, of Providence, into a vehicle at gunpoint in November of 1984. Mr. Gomes' badly decomposed body was discovered in April of 1985 in the woods of Westport, some five months after his November 1984 disappearance.

Recent developments in forensic technology make it possible to collect DNA from evidence in circumstances where DNA collection was not previously possible. This technology allows us to gather evidence from items today in furtherance of our unsolved investigations. District Attorney Quinn's Cold Case Unit is reviewing every item of evidence from every homicide over the last 45 years to determine whether new leads can be developed from employing these new methods to appropriate items of evidence.

District Attorney Quinn is encouraged by the new technology and its potential to help solve these cases. Although recognizing these advances in technology, District Attorney

Quinn believes that many cases are still solved “the old-fashioned way” by relying on citizens to do what is right and provide information that may be critical to solving a case.

“These are some of the worst cases we see, and many families have waited for years hoping for answers and some measure of justice,” District Attorney Quinn said “I remain committed to ensuring that this office is doing everything it can with respect to available resources and technology to solve these important cases.”

District Attorney Quinn believes that by highlighting these cases, the victims will be remembered and citizens will be reminded of these terrible crimes. He knows from experience that in many murder cases, there are people who have information that could be helpful but have kept silent for a variety of reasons. “It is never too late to do the right thing” District Attorney Quinn said. “We hope that anyone with this information will finally decide to break that silence by coming forward.” □□

### *Unsolved Cases*