

Blue Mountain County Sheriff's Office

Cold Case Division – Investigative Report

Case Number: FA-19-074	Incident Type: Homicide (Cold Case)
Date of Incident: May 3, 1990	Incident Address: Blue Mountain Hiking Trail, OR
Victim: Jessica Black (DOB: 03/21/1960)	Victim Address: 527 Wheaton Place, Blue Mountain, OR 97000

On 1/15/24 I received a report from the Blue Mountain Crime Laboratory, indicating an unknown male DNA profile was developed from BMSO-013.1 (left hand fingernail scrapings). The same unknown male DNA profile was obtained from BMSO-009.2 (the cuttings from the ends of the 36-inch piece of twine). The unknown male profile was uploaded to the state and national DNA databases with no matches. See lab report for additional details.

After receiving the lab report indicating an unknown male DNA profile was generated from the evidence in this case, I went back through the case file and noted two men listed in the original investigation who needed to be eliminated – the victim's boyfriend, Mike Averil, and the man who found the body, Allen Cole. Additionally, follow-up with Kurt Sinclair is needed to add context to his name and composite sketch in the original case file.

Follow-Up Interviews

Allen Cole (Complainant, Reported Finding the Victim)

On 1/22/24, I conducted a background check on Allen Cole and found that he is currently incarcerated in the Oregon State Penitentiary. According to his criminal record, Cole was convicted of multiple felonies stemming from a methamphetamine operation he was running in 2002. Based on his criminal history, it appears he has been incarcerated since 2003.



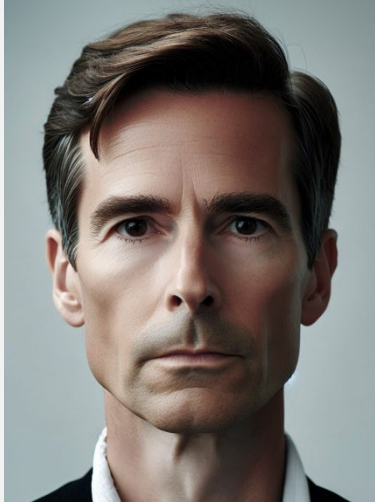
Name: Allen Andrew Cole
Date of Birth: 09/28/1963
Gender: Male
Height: 5'8 Weight: 165 lbs.

On 2/12/24, Detective Borzetti (#223) and I traveled to the Oregon State Penitentiary to interview Cole. Cole was brought to an interview room, and we introduced ourselves and explained that we were investigating a cold case. After advising Cole of his rights, he agreed to speak to us. I asked Cole if he recalled finding a woman's body near a hiking trail in 1990 and he said he did. Cole walked us through the events of that day but said his memory was not very good. He said he was out walking the trails when he had to urinate. He decided to find a private spot and when he walked into the woods, he saw a woman on the ground. He said she looked dead because she wasn't moving. I asked Cole if he touched the body, and he said no. He said it freaked him out, so he went back to his truck and then drove to a pay phone to call the police. I asked Cole if he remembered anything else about the incident. He said the only other thing he could think of, was that a few days later, he was back up on the same trail hiking and he saw the same young white male wearing a blue maintenance man type jumpsuit that he had previously told law enforcement about. It struck him as odd, because the guy didn't seem to be working and was just hanging around in the same general area where the body was found. A composite sketch of the individual was created during his initial interview and included in the case file.

Prior to leaving the prison, Detective Borzetti (#223) and I met with a Department of Corrections Investigator and asked him to check their corrections database to confirm that Allen Cole's DNA had been collected. We learned that a sample of Cole's DNA had been collected during his prison intake in 2003.

Mike Averil (Victim's Boyfriend)

Mike Averil was the victim's boyfriend at the time of the homicide. He reported being over an hour away from where the victim was killed at the time of her death. There were no witnesses or other corroborating evidence to confirm Averil's alibi. I conducted a criminal history check on Mike Averil and found that he was arrested out of state for DUI in 1991, resulting in a fine and 6-month license suspension. As documented during the original investigation, Averil was listed as a suspect arrested for involvement in two stalking/harassment cases from 1986 and 1988, but neither case was charged.



Name: Michael Isaac Averil
Date of Birth: 11/18/1954
Gender: Male
Height: 5'11 Weight: 176 lbs.

I requested copies of the two cases from archives and learned that in both of those cases, the victims were women who had dated Averil and then broken up with him. In one case, Averil was accused of following the woman in his car while she was out jogging. In the other case, Averil was accused of following the woman to work on several occasions and sitting outside her house at night in his truck.

On 1/20/24, Detective Borzetti (#223) and I located Mike Averil at his place of employment – Blue Valley Hardware. I advised that I was assigned to follow up on Jessica's case and asked if he had any additional information. Averil seemed surprised and said he assumed the case was closed. I advised Averil that there is no statute of limitations for murder cases and that her case was one of several the Sheriff's Office reopened.

When asked if he was aware that Jessica was pregnant at the time of her murder, Averil stated that he was previously made aware during the original investigation. Averil said he submitted to a paternity test in 1990 during the investigation that determined that he was the father. He claimed he did not know before her murder, and he doubted the victim was even aware of it.

I explained that I would like to eliminate him as a suspect in Jessica's murder and asked if he would be willing to provide a voluntary DNA sample. Averil hesitated and then asked if he needed a lawyer. I advised that it was up to him. Averil then said he didn't trust the government and he was not willing to provide a DNA sample.

Kurt Sinclair (Groundskeeper)

On 2/14/24 I conducted a records check on Kurt Sinclair and found that he was arrested for attempted kidnapping in 1988, but the case was dismissed. Further details revealed that Sinclair followed a woman to her car in a mall parking lot and attempted to force her into the vehicle. A citizen intervened and Sinclair was detained by mall security. Sinclair was released from jail a week later after the victim indicated she was leaving the state and declined to participate in the prosecution. I did not find any other arrests or reports involving Sinclair in the local databases.



Name: Kurt Frederick Sinclair
 Date of Birth: 06/26/1968
 Gender: Male
 Height: 6'2 Weight: 194 lbs.

On 2/15/24 I attempted to contact Kurt Sinclair at his last known address. I spoke with Mrs. Barbara Sinclair who said she was Kurt's mother.

Barbara Sinclair (Mother of Kurt Sinclair):

Mrs. Sinclair reported that Kurt died by suicide in 1992 while living out of state. She said he did maintenance work for the local parks department from 1985 to 1991 when he lost his job. Mrs. Sinclair said Kurt went into a deep depression after losing his job and never really recovered.

When asked why Kurt lost his job, his mother stated that her son was a little odd and often misunderstood. Following the unsolved murder of Jessica Black, several female hikers reported that they crossed paths with Kurt on the trail and felt unsafe and uncomfortable. Kurt's boss decided to terminate his employment to appease the community and avoid any further issues.

When asked if she or her son had been interviewed by police previously, she stated that she had not and she was not aware if Kurt ever spoke to police regarding the murder as he no longer lived with his parents at that time.

I contacted Vital Statistics and obtained a copy of Kurt Sinclair's death certificate which indicated he died on 3/16/1992. The cause of death was asphyxiation due to ligature hanging. The manner of death is listed as Suicide.

Detective Annika Greenberg #127	Date of Report: February 16, 2024
---------------------------------	--