



Riverside County District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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MAN CHARGED IN 1972 MURDER OF WOMAN IN DESERT HOT SPRINGS ARRAIGNED TODAY

RIVERSIDE – Today, Sept. 23, 2014, a Florida man was arraigned on a murder charge for the 1972 killing of a woman whose decomposed body was found in Desert Hot Springs.

Michael Jerome Hayes, DOB: 9-22-48, was arrested on Sept. 4, 2014, in Pompano Beach, Florida, by Riverside County District Attorney's investigators assigned to the U.S. Marshals Service Pacific Southwest Regional Fugitive Task Force. They were assisted by Florida law enforcement authorities. The arrest was subsequent to a warrant issued for Hayes' arrest on Aug. 15, 2014, by a Riverside County Superior Court judge.

Hayes was first charged by the DA's Office with the 1972 murder of Mary Costa in August 2012. A preliminary hearing was held in September 2012 after which a judge ruled there was enough evidence for Hayes to stand trial. However, a different judge dismissed the case in November 2012, ruling that the 40-year delay in bringing this cold case murder to trial prejudiced the defendant. In December 2012, the DA's Office appealed that ruling. On April 3, 2014, the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Two, reversed the dismissal by the trial court and held that the trial court abused its discretion, adding that the defendant's motion to dismiss should have been denied because the defendant failed to produce evidence that he was actually prejudiced by the delay. In July 2014, the California Supreme Court denied the defendant's request to review the case further so the case was returned to Riverside County Superior Court.

At today's arraignment, Hayes entered a plea of not guilty to the murder charge and is now scheduled for a trial readiness conference on Oct. 2, 2014, in Dept. 41 at the Hall of Justice in Riverside.

On March 12, 1972, a passing motorist discovered the victim's body on Cottonwood Drive, north of Avenue 20, in Desert Hot Springs. The investigation went cold and the Riverside County Sheriff's Department Central Homicide Unit conducted a "cold case" investigation in about 2010, ultimately leading to the filing of charges in 2012.

Hayes is being held in lieu of \$ 1 million bail in case RIF1205953.