

Cold Case Murder Investigation Solved By Detective Splittorff, Alton Police Department

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton Police Chief Jarrett Ford announced today that Mexican authorities have transferred a suspect in a cold case investigation for First-Degree Murder that dates back to 2014.

On August 5, 2014, officers from the Alton Police Department responded to 2142 Seminary Road, Alton, Madison County, Illinois, in reference to suspected human remains being located inside an abandoned vehicle.

Chief Ford said Alton Police Officers located the abandoned vehicle inside an open-air car port that was attached to an enclosed garage on the Northwest corner of the property at 2142 Seminary Road. Officers observed what appeared to be highly decayed human remains inside the rear seat and trunk area of the vehicle.

"Due to the decomposition of the suspected human remains, Dr. Lindsey Trammel, a Forensic Investigator and Anthropologist with the St. Louis County, Missouri, Office of the Medical Examiner was summoned to the scene to assist the Alton Police Department and the Madison County Coroner's Office with this investigation," Chief Ford said. "A collaborative effort between the Madison County Coroner's Officer, Forensic Pathologist Dr. Raj Nanduri, and Forensic Anthropologist Dr. Lindsey Trammel determined the cause of death in this incident to be 'Homicidal violence.'"



"From 2014 through mid-2018, detectives from the Alton Police Department, specifically Detective Joe Splittorff, followed up on a variety of leads. Detective Splittorff went through extensive efforts to determine the victim's identity, which included a heavy focus on DNA collection and testing. Based on information obtained

during the investigation and the results of DNA analysis, the victim in this incident was positively identified as Jose Randolph Pagoada, a Honduran national."

Ford also said Detective Splittorff's efforts also identified a suspect, identified as Odilon Villagran Gudino, a Mexican citizen. Gudino was in the United States illegally at the time of the murder. He returned to Mexico shortly after the murder.

"On July 26, 2018, the Madison County State's Attorney's Office issued an arrest warrant for Odilon Villagran Gudino," Chief Ford said. "He was charged with three counts of 1st Degree Murder and Concealment of a Homicidal Death.

"In April 2021, a provisional arrest warrant, authorizing Odilon Villagran Gudino's arrest in Mexico, was sought and obtained by the United States Department of Justice Office of International Affairs with the assistance of the Alton Police Department. In late April 2021, Odilon Villagran Gudino was arrested in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. Gudino was held in Mexican custody pending extradition proceedings prior to his transfer to the United States.

"On May 16, 2023, Mexican authorities transferred custody of Odilon Villagran Gudino to U.S. authorities. He was subsequently flown to the United States and then transported to the Alton City Jail on that same date. He is now in custody at the Madison County Jail in Edwardsville."

Ford expressed that he is beyond proud of Detective Splittorff and his incredible resolve to ensure justice in this case.

"This is one of the best pieces of investigative work I have ever seen. It is no doubt a once-in-a-career type case," Ford said. "His hard work has ensured that Jose Randolph Pagoada's loved ones now have answers as to what happened to their beloved family member. I say it often but this is truly a prime example of the extent the Alton Police Department will go to in order to ensure perpetrators of violence are held accountable.

"I would like to send my sincere thanks to all the many people and agencies that assisted the Alton Police Department in this investigation. There are so many to name but some of them include the Illinois State Police, Madison County Sheriff's Office, Washington Park Police Department, Madison County Coroner's Office, St. Louis County, Missouri, Office of the Medical Examiner, University of North Texas Center for Human Identification, FBI, Immigration Customs Enforcement, United States Department of Justice Office of International Affairs, the Honduran news outlet, Canal 35, and so many more.

"I'd also like to send a special thanks to the Madison County State's Attorney's Office as well as the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office. Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine, and St. Clair County State's Attorney James Gomric, are instrumental in the prosecution of this case."

These charges, as well as the statements made herein, are based upon probable cause. The defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.