



## SALT LAKE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

MIKE BROWN *Police Chief*

PUBLIC INFORMATION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# SLCPD Announces Closure of 1979 Missing Persons Cold Case

SALT LAKE CITY – Today, the Salt Lake City Police Department announced the closure of a missing persons cold case after DNA testing confirmed human remains located in Millard County, Utah belonged to Sandra Matott—who disappeared in July of 1979.

To date, this is the oldest missing persons cold case closed by the Salt Lake City Police Department.

The Millard County Sheriff's Office also announced the closure of its homicide investigation into Sandra Matott's death.

**Salt Lake Police Chief Mike Brown** said, "No matter how much time passes, the detectives of the Salt Lake City Police Department will never let up in their quest to solve every case and to get answers for loved ones. Solving a cold case requires teamwork, dedication and an unrelenting pursuit of justice. That's how we got to today—because of the teamwork of multiple agencies and the dedication of the current and prior detectives throughout Utah who worked Ms. Matott's case. They never gave up on this investigation. They recognized the work that needed to be done to get the family of Sandra Matott answers, and for that I could not be prouder."

**Millard County Sheriff Richard Jacobson** said, "We are grateful to be in an age where technological advances have provided many avenues for law enforcement to find answers not previously available to them. Without the resources available through NamUs, we don't know how much longer Sandra Matott would have been unidentified. We send our condolences to her family for their loss and many years of waiting. It is an honor to us that we were able to help bring them some answers."

**Darrell Haymes, Sandra Matott's son**, said, "We are happy the case is now closed because it brings us some answers. As a family we are happy about this development, but also sad it took this long. Forty-two years is a long time. We are happy that the

investigators never closed the case and continued to work on it so we could reach this point.”

- On July 18, 1979, the Salt Lake City Police Department opened a missing person's investigation on Sandra Matott after her husband, Warren Matott, reported his wife missing. Warren Matott reported Sandra was last seen at a bar eight days earlier in Salt Lake City. At the time, an SLCPD follow-up detective attempted to contact Warren Matott but was unsuccessful.
- On August 19, 1979, the Millard County Sheriff's Office received information that a hunting party located skeletal human remains near the I-15 Cove Fort exit near a road called "Old 91." There were no signs of homicidal violence to the skeletal remains. At the scene, investigators located two pieces of jewelry, a ring and a watch. Both were later determined to belong to Sandra Matott. [See photos below]. Due to the suspicious circumstances, the Millard County Sheriff's Office opened a homicide investigation.
- On December 17, 2012, the Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification's Missing Persons Clearinghouse contacted the SLCPD with information from the Utah Medical Examiner's Office. Investigators sought to confirm whether the information was connected to the original missing person's case from 1979.
- Between January and April 2013, an SLCPD Homicide Detective was re-assigned to the case and determined Sandra Matott was still missing. The SLCPD detective entered Sandra's information into two national databases for missing persons while conducting additional investigative follow-up.
- The investigation continued through the summer of 2013. During the investigation, Sandra Matott's family reported they believed Warren Matott, Sandra's husband, was likely responsible for her disappearance and death. Warren Matott died on October 11, 1999 in California.
- On February 1, 2019, Sandra Matott was entered as a "Cold Case Missing Person" into Utah's "Cold Case Database." Her case information was later entered into a federal database that assists law enforcement in identifying, locating, apprehending, and prosecuting people responsible for violent crimes.
- On November 25, 2019, the Millard County Sheriff's Office contacted the SLCPD after a case file was located describing skeletal human remains possibly connected to Sandra's missing person's case.
- In December of 2019, Utah's Forensic Anthropologist completed a report which allowed the Millard County Sheriff's Office to submit the previously recovered bones to the University of North Texas for DNA testing in October of 2020.
- On August 10, 2021, the Millard County Sheriff's Office received confirmation the remains located in 1979 belonged to Sandra Matott.

- On August 13, 2021, the Salt Lake City Police Department and the Millard County Sheriff's Office met with the family of Sandra Matott and informed them of the case developments.

The Utah Medical Examiner's Office never determined a cause of death for Sandra Matott.

Detectives from both SLCPD and the Millard County Sheriff's Office believe Warren Matott likely had more information about the disappearance and death of Sandra Matott. However, there was never any probable cause to charge Warren Matott in connection to this case.

In 1984, serial killer Henry Lee Lucas confessed to killing Sandra Matott. His claims were vague, and detectives could not verify his confession. Media reports indicated that Lucas confessed, and later recanted, to hundreds of murders.

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*Note: The family of Sandra Matott is willing to speak with media. Reporters wishing to contact them should call the SLCPD Public Information Officer at 801-799-6397 for contact information.*

*Media wishing to speak with the Millard County Sheriff's Office should contact Sgt. Pat Bennett at [PBennett@co.millard.ut.us](mailto:PBennett@co.millard.ut.us).*

*Four photographs are being provided below by the Salt Lake City Police Department and Millard County Sheriff's Office.*



Photo 1 Description: Sandra Matott's watch and ring recovered from Millard County Sheriff's Office in 1979. (Millard County Sheriff's Office)

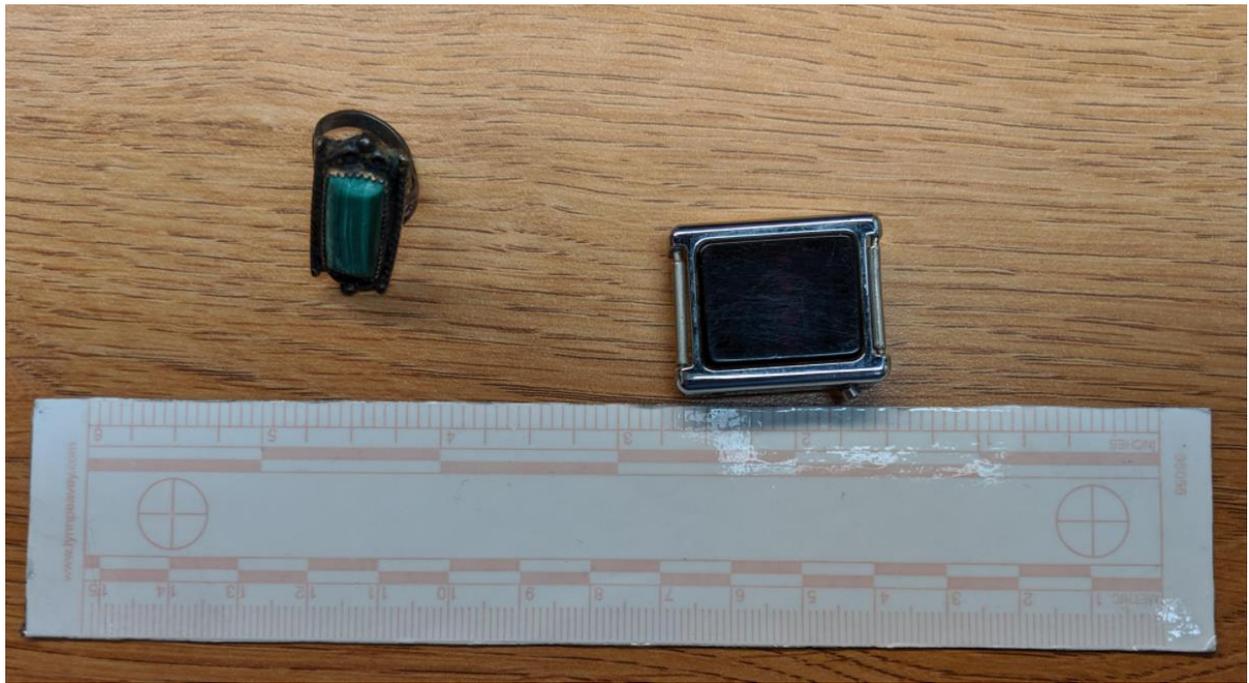


Photo 2 Description: Sandra Matott's watch and ring recovered from Millard County Sheriff's Office in 1979. (Salt Lake City Police Department)



Photo 3 Description: Artist sketch based on remains found in Millard County rendered August 19, 1979. (Millard County Sheriff's Office)



Photo 4 Description: An undated photo of Sandra Matott (Salt Lake City Police Department)

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