

Saxx Amore

Man being held in beating death

By JAY JORDEN, Staff Writer

Police arrested a 19-year-old man last night in connection with the beating death of a 27-year-old woman whose body was found Nov. 20, with her sleeping two-year-old child in a van.

An indictment was expected today against Jesus Garza, who was in city jail this morning on a murder warrant issued last night.

Homicide investigators are also looking for the driver of a vehicle who witnesses observed picking up two hitchhikers near where Dahlia Saucedo's nude body was found in the back of a brown van. Police said they hope the man can provide information on one of the hitchhikers.

Garza's arrest at 7:45 p.m. in front of his residence at 2522 Dunbar culminated a nine-day police inquiry. Lt. Malcolm Pace of the police criminal investigation division said at a press conference this morning.

Pace appealed for citizen help in locating the driver of a rusty car seen in the early morning of Nov. 20. Investigators, he said, want to talk to the driver of an older-model white Mustang who picked up two hitchhikers on Texas Highway 286 in the area of the Agnes Street overpass over Crosstown Expressway about 2:30 a.m. Nov. 20.

He said the vehicle was described as having no rear windshield. Its driver was an Anglo male, about 25 years old, with brownish-blond shoulder-length hair and a bushy mustache.

Police said anyone knowing anything about the driver and vehicle should contact the homicide division.

Police believe the offender and another man were picked up by the driver of the automobile.

Pace said he could not say if other arrests were imminent in the case.

The suspect and Mrs. Saucedo had known each other for a short time, Lt. Pace said.

Information the driver could provide would be a confirmation of facts we already have, Pace said.

Pace declined to comment on a motive for the woman's death or whether she had been the victim of a burglary or other crime.

Garza, who police said was unemployed, is expected to be transferred to Nueces County Jail today.

Police held another man today in city jail for questioning in connection with the homicide investigation, but charges will not be filed, they said.

Three CID investigators interviewed acquaintances of Mrs. Saucedo and persons she had seen within the three days before she was found dead at the corner of Mexico and Mussett streets, police said.

The woman's husband, Apolinar Saucedo, was in Houston when she was killed, Pace said.

A tire tool and knife were found in the van, which was discovered by two boys on their way to school. However, police declined to comment on whether they might have been weapons in the beating.

Mrs. Saucedo's clothing was found about 7:15 a.m. in the van, which had been parked in a vacant lot near the intersection. Her two-year-old daughter, Delia, was asleep in the van when the boys found it.

Mrs. Saucedo died of traumatic injuries to her body, police said. Her wallet was found in the van, they said.

Garza, 19
(Dahlia Saucedo, 27 year old - Saucedo)

cc - crew

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COMPASS PHOTO BY MICHAEL J. ...

NEWS

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Around the City
WITH FLEANDER MORTENBEN

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Acquitted man hopes arrest of brother man will help clear his name

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JIM THOMAS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



GEORGE GONGORA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Acquitted man hopes arrest of another man will help clear his name

Jesus Garza (photograph at left) was acquitted of murder seven years ago in a case that was revived yesterday with the arrest of Carlos Hernandez (photograph at right), who was escorted to the Nueces County Jail by Corpus Christi police dete- tives Paul Rivera (left) and Eddie Garza. Hernan-

dez is charged with the death of Dahlia Saucedo, whose body was found in the back of her van on Nov. 20, 1979. Hernandez was a defense witness at Garza's trial in January, 1980, although this man were not acquainted before either the crime or the trial, according to Garza's attorney. Though acquit-

ted, Garza claims, his life has remained un- clouded. He says his wife left him, that he is un- employed and that he's tried to commit suicide se- veral times. "If he is guilty, I do hope he gets what he deserves," Garza said today of Hernandez. "I hope this will clear my name."

Cavazos campaigns for tax measures

State Representative Eddie Cavazos campaigned today for a state tax plan that would increase the sales tax and eliminate sales tax exemptions.

Cavazos, D-Corpus Christi, said those two mea- sures could increase the state's revenues by \$1.5 billion, about half the state's projected budget short- fall this year.

County Courthouse before a group of local directors of state offices. He offered a worst-case scenario of what would happen to their programs without a tax plan.

"It's time to face up to a tax bill. There's no way around it, there's no reason to delay it," Cavazos said.

jobs and eventually would force local entities to raise their own tax rates, Cavazos said.

"I need your help to go out in the community and talk to your neighbors, friends and relatives and encourage them to support a tax bill," he said.

"The only way to get a tax bill in an election year is if the bond is raised," Cavazos said.

MURDER

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...Kelly, defense attorney for Carlos Hernandez, said yesterday that Hernandez's release Tuesday afternoon is the only just thing that can be done, and said the Nueces County District Attorney's office lacked preparation with its evidence.

Hernandez, 32, was arrested July 24 after being indicted by the Nueces County Grand Jury the previous day in connection with the death of 27-year-old Dahlia Saucedo.

District Judge Jack Blackmon dismissed charges against Hernandez. Blackmon said yesterday he dismissed the case because of lack of evidence, lack of witnesses and because so much time had passed since the murder was committed.

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An "X" had been carved in the Saucedo's back, and she had been strangled with her own blue jeans. Her 3-year-old daughter was found sleeping in the van.

In 1980, Jesse Z. Garcia, 19, was indicted and tried for the brutal murder, but the jury found him not guilty.

During the 1980 trial, Hernandez, whose underwear and fingerprints were found in the van, admitted to having had sex with Mrs. Saucedo the night she was murdered, but said he did not kill her.

"He's innocent," said Kelly of Hernandez. "He should have never been indicted, and the poor guy should have never spent five months in jail."

Blackmon said because of the lack of witnesses and evidence along with the lapse of time, "I do what I thought was right" by allowing Hernandez to go free.

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City man is jailed in 7-year-old murder case

By Libby Avery

STAFF WRITER

Police yesterday arrested a Corpus Christi man in connection with the brutal slaying seven years ago of a 27-year-old woman who was found with an "X" carved in her back.

The man arrested yesterday was a key defense witness in a trial six years ago that cleared another man of the woman's murder.

Police said they arrested Carlos Hernandez, 32, of 1201 S. Alameda St., at a friend's home after a seven-hour search.

Hernandez was in City Jail last night in lieu of a \$25,000 bond set by District Judge Jack Blackmon. He is expected to be transferred to the Nueces County Jail at 9 a.m. today.

The search for Hernandez began after he was indicted by the Nueces County

The 27-year-old victim's body was found with an 'X' carved in her back. The woman's 2-year-old child was found asleep just feet away.

Grand Jury Wednesday afternoon in connection with the death of Dahlia Saucedo.

Police Lt. P. Gutierrez said Hernandez was arrested at 10:55 a.m. yesterday at a friend's home on Seventh Street, by Sgts. Paul Rivera and Eddie Garza, with the assistance of Sgt. Robert De La Garza.

Rivera said there have always been questions about Hernandez's possible involvement in the Saucedo death, but police didn't have enough evidence to arrest him. Police reopened the investigation several months ago after receiv-

ing new evidence, which Gutierrez would not disclose.

The case began Nov. 20, 1979, when two school boys discovered Mrs. Saucedo's nude, beaten and blood-stained body in the back of her van parked in a lot near Mexico and Mussel streets.

An "X" had been carved in Mrs. Saucedo's back, and she had been strangled with a pair of jeans. The woman's 2-year-old daughter was found sleeping in the van near her mother's body.

In 1980, 19-year-old Jesse Z. Garza was indicted and tried for the murder,

but an eight-man, four-woman jury found him not guilty.

Albert Pena, Garza's attorney, told the *Caller* yesterday he subpoenaed Hernandez during the trial to help prove his client's innocence.

At the trial, Hernandez admitted he had sex with Mrs. Saucedo on the night she was murdered, and the autopsy showed she had engaged in sexual activity within 12 hours of her death. Police discovered Hernandez's fingerprints and underwear in the van.

Pena said Hernandez's testimony was an important factor in the not-guilty verdict. Pena said he asked the jury during closing arguments at the trial to recommend that police re-examine what involvement Hernandez may have had in the murder.

Ken Botary, who prosecuted the case

Please see **A19A/18A**

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS
THU, FEB. 25, 1986

Arrest

FROM PAGE 1A

and now is an attorney in private practice, said statements from Pedro Olivarez, a friend of Garza's, had convinced him Garza killed Mrs. Saucedo. Olivarez had told police that he watched Garza rape and kill the woman.

Olivarez was not eager to testify when the case came to trial, Botary said. At that time, Olivarez told the prosecutor Garza had not raped Mrs. Saucedo. Botary said prosecutors decided to continue with the case, believing Olivarez was just reluctant to testify against his friend, but would still tell his story, Botary said.

"I was convinced Jesse was the culprit. We tried the case as best we could," Botary said. "Pedro wasn't a strong witness."

In light of the new evidence uncovered by investigators, Botary said he no longer is convinced Garza killed Mrs. Saucedo.

After the trial, the jury's foreman said the panel concluded Olivarez's testimony left doubts about Garza's involvement in the murder. Jurors also thought police and the district attorney's office had done a poor job of investigating the case.

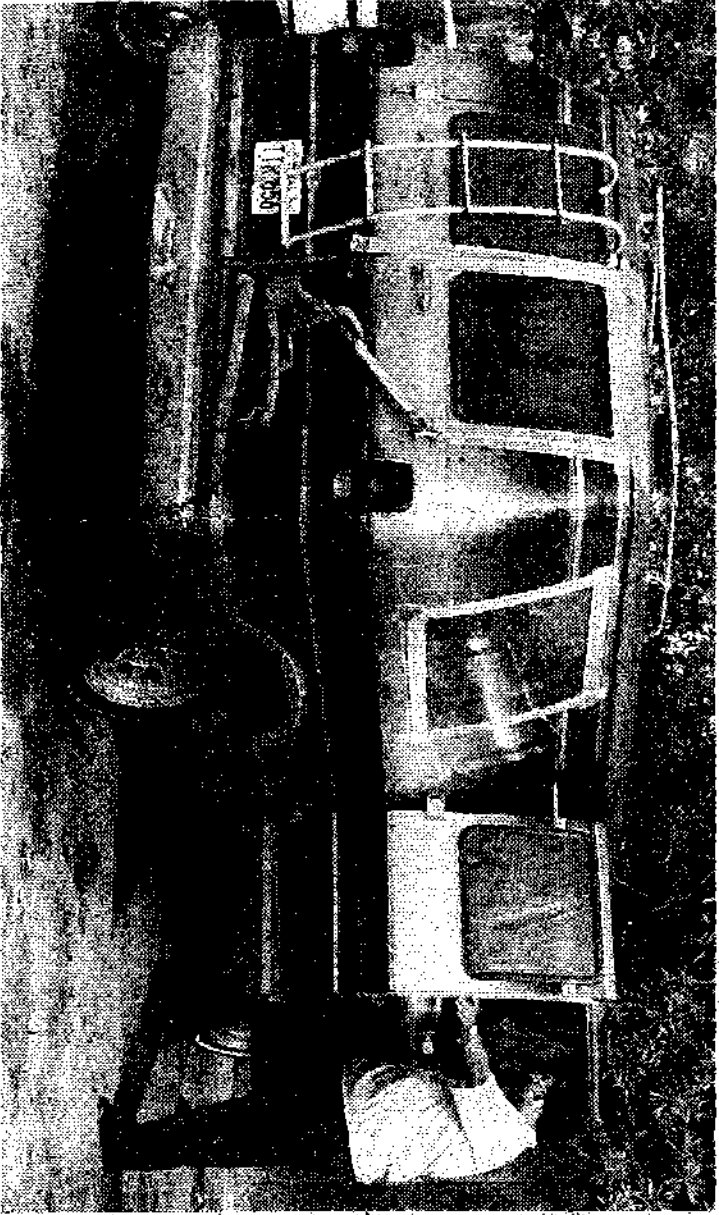
Dec. 31. Story is on Page 12A. ... attempt to combat a trans. ... and local Eastern Manager A. J. ... Day ...

Nude woman found dead in van here

By JAY JORDEN
Staff Writer

The nude body of a woman, apparently beaten to death, was found today in a van parked near

the center of the city. Her two-year-old daughter was asleep in the van. Police were awaiting the results of an autopsy on the woman late this morning. She was found



Employee at city car pound inspects van in which woman was found dead today. George Gongora — Staff Photographer

about 7:30 a.m. in the customized van, parked in a vacant lot near the corner of Mexico and Mussett streets.

Bloodstains were found on the body from blows she received, a spokeswoman for the Nueces County Medical Examiner's Office said. Police are investigating also the possibility the woman may have been strangled.

The child was not harmed. She was at the police station this morning. Police spokesmen did not know whether the child saw the attack.

Two boys who police said were on their way to school found the van beside a clump of trees near a dirt road which extended from Mexico Street onto the lot. The boys also discovered the woman's daughter inside the van, police said.

The van apparently had been driven up the dirt road, then wheeled around on the lot and parked facing back toward the road.

The woman, who police said is a local resident, had been dead a short time. Authorities declined to say whether she had been sexually molested. Her body was found on its side in the back of the van, police said.

Police are withholding her name pending notification of next-of-kin, Lt. Malcolm Pace of the police robbery and homicide section said.

As yet, there are no suspects in the murder, Lt. Pace said. The slaying followed two recent rapes — one this weekend and another last night in the 900 block of South Port.

"We have no reason at this time to believe that the two incidents were related," Lt. Pace said. The vacant lot is surrounded on the south and west sides by two warehouses. It is three blocks southwest of Evans school and two blocks east of the Crosstown Expressway.

Dec. 31. Story is on Page 12A.

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Day

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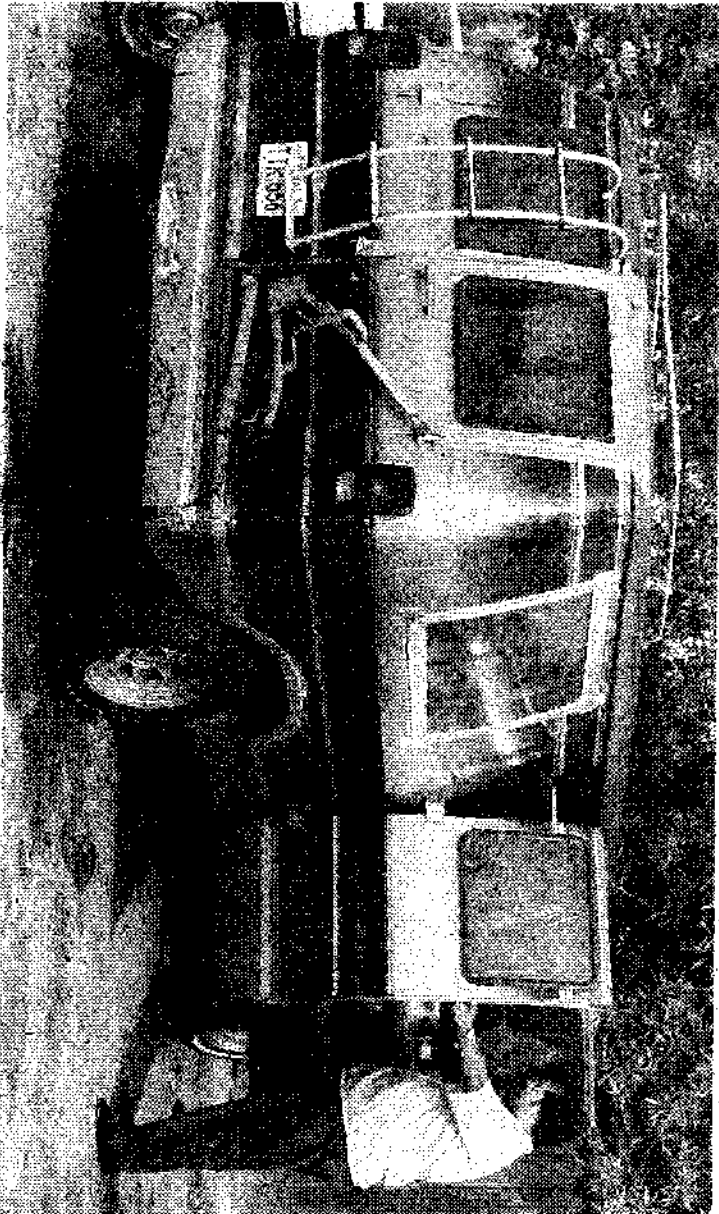
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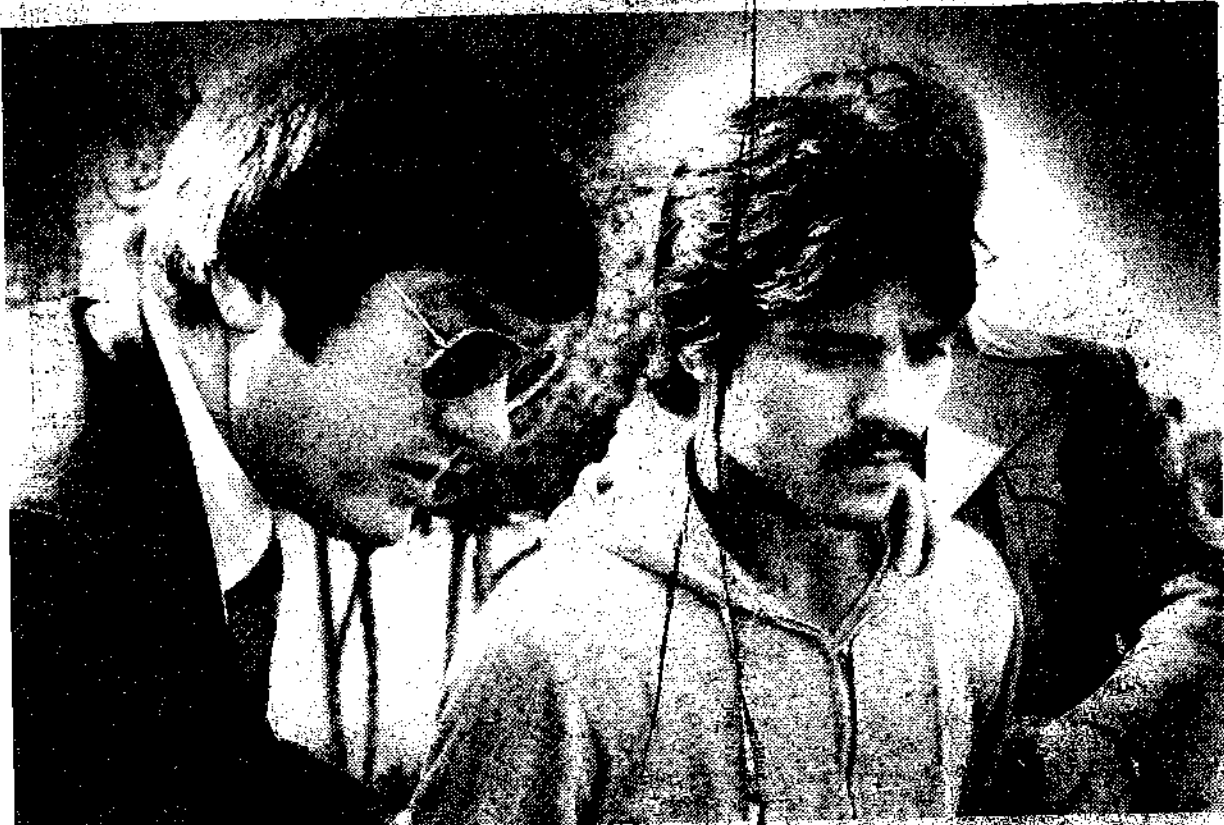
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Georgia Gongora — Staff Photographer
Employee at city car pound inspects van in which woman was found dead today



Garza led from city jail by Sgt. Paul Rivera (left)

(Photo by Norm Tindell)

County grand jury indicts man for beating death of woman

by CHRISTY HOPPE
Staff Writer

Jesus Garza, 19, was indicted yesterday by the Nueces County grand jury for the Nov. 20 murder of a 27-year-old woman found dead in a van with her sleeping 2-year-old daughter beside her.

Garza, of 2522 Dunbar, was arrested Thursday night outside his home in connection with the death of Dalia Saucedo, who lived with her husband and two children in the 1800 block of Cliff Maus.

Garza is currently being held in Nueces County jail on \$50,000 bond.

Two school boys discovered Mrs. Saucedo's nude body in the rear of her brown van parked in a vacant lot near Mexico and Mussett streets. Her young daughter, Delia, was found unharmed.

An autopsy later revealed Mrs. Saucedo was eaten to death.

Garza and Mrs. Saucedo had known each other several days before she was discovered dead, Lt. Malcolm Pace said yesterday.

He said the two had met at a local night club, but declined further comments on where the two might have been seen together the night of her death.

cutable crime is connected with the murder. If Mrs. Saucedo, for example, had been robbed and killed, the convicted killer could have been given the death sentence.

Pace said Garza's arrest was the culmination of nine days of investigation. Police questioned acquaintances and friends who had seen her at particular times and places during the last three days of her life, Pace said.

Another city man was held in city jail Thursday on possible homicide charges in connection with the murder. Police officials said the man provided information concerning the killing, but was not directly involved and will not be charged.

Pace asked for citizens' help to finish tying down the case. Investigators wish to obtain a statement from the driver of an older model, rusty, white mustang with no rear windshield.

The driver, an Anglo male, about 25 years old, with brownish-blond hair and a bushy mustache, was seen by witnesses picking up two hitchhikers on Texas Highway 286 near the murder scene.

One of those hitchhikers picked up around 2:30 a.m. Nov. 20 is believed to have been Garza.

✓ CCW ✓ Photos



Garza led from city jail by Sgt. Paul Rivera (left)

(Photo by Norm Tindell)

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