

# Father Charged In 1995 Slayings Held Without Bond In Ohio; Extradition Hearing Set

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## New Britain Police

The New Britain Police Department announced the arrest early Wednesday of Robert Honsch (L), of Dalton Ohio, who is accused of murdering Elizabeth Honsch (C), 17 years old at the time of her death and Marcia Honsch (R), who was Elizabeth's mother.

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NEW BRITAIN — The man accused of killing his daughter and wife in 1995 and leaving their bodies in New Britain and Massachusetts is being held in Ohio without bond and is scheduled for an extradition hearing next month, court records show.

Robert Honsch appeared in court in Ohio Thursday on a felony fugitive from justice charge related to the murder charge in Massachusetts, and he is likely to be sent there first for prosecution.

Honsch is accused of killing Elizabeth Honsch, 17, whose body was discovered in New Britain in September 1995, and Elizabeth's mother, Marcia Honsch, 53, whose body was discovered in Tolland, Mass., about one week later, police said.

An Ohio judge scheduled an extradition hearing for on Aug. 18. The district attorney in Hampden County, Mass., said in a statement that arrangements will be made for Honsch to be arraigned in Westfield District Court.

New Britain police said they expect Honsch to be prosecuted in Connecticut after criminal proceedings in Massachusetts.

Honsch is being held without bond, court records show, because he faces a murder charge in Massachusetts that is punishable by life in prison.

Honsch was arrested in Dalton, Ohio, where he was living there with a new wife and children, police said.

Arrest warrants issued Wednesday morning for Honsch charge him with murder in the slayings of both Elizabeth and Marcia Honsch, police said. Police said that, to their knowledge, he has had no criminal involvement in the 19 years since their deaths.

Elizabeth Honsch's body was found on Sept. 28, 1995, with a gunshot wound to the head, and wrapped in trash bags and sleeping bags behind the shopping plaza at 593 Hartford Road. They believe that she had been killed not long before she was found.

On Oct. 6, 1995, a hiker found Marcia Honsch's body not far from the entrance to Tolland State Forrest in Tolland, Mass., about 40 miles away from where Elizabeth's body was found, police said. Marcia had also died from a gunshot wound to the head, and police estimated that she had been dead for about a week before her body was found. The women were from the Brewster, N.Y., area.

In 2007, the remains of three more women were discovered in woods behind the same plaza where Elizabeth's body was found, although police said there was no evidence that those bodies were linked to the Honsch case.

New Britain Police Chief James Wardell said Wednesday that in the nearly 19 years since Elizabeth's body was found, the case was "never cold."

"This has been an intensive investigation, it has never stopped," Wardell said. "We don't give up on any case. It does not matter how old the case is."

"The biggest hurdle we had in the investigation was the identification process," said New Britain police Capt. Thomas Steck.

The victims were identified after family members filed missing persons reports last month with the New York State Police. Police said they could not comment on why the family took almost 19 years to file missing persons reports.

New York State Police used an Internet search to help connect the missing people with the Jane Doe case in New Britain and the case in Massachusetts, police said. With help from the state's forensics lab, police were able to determine that the two missing people were the victims in New Britain and Massachusetts.

Evidence collected by Massachusetts State Police led investigators to believe that the victims had a connection to upstate New York, police said. The investigation showed that Marcia and Elizabeth Honsch had been living with Robert Honsch until 1995, when family members lost contact with the three, police said.

New Britain police, along with Massachusetts and New York State police, traveled to Dalton, Ohio, after determining that Robert Honsch was living there with his new wife and children. Investigators interviewed Honsch in Ohio on Wednesday and secured two search warrants, police said. Evidence they found connected Honsch to the scene in New Britain, police said. He was later taken into custody.

Police withheld additional details, saying that the arrest warrant was sealed.

"We can stand here today knowing we are one very large step closer to justice for Marcia and Elizabeth Honsch," New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart said Wednesday. "Once again, New Britain law enforcement officials have made a bold statement that if you commit a crime here you will be caught, no matter how long that may take."

Since finding the remains of three women near where Elizabeth Honsch's body was found, not far from Westfarms mall, police have identified two of the women, one in 2010 and one in 2013. Police said they were treating both cases as homicides, although no one has been arrested in their deaths. Only hip bones of the third woman were found.

Wardell said there was no evidence other than proximity to connect those three women to Elizabeth Honsch.

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