

'07 Gary cold case mystery ends with Wisconsin arrest



Taylin Hill, arrested in Wisconsin in the death of her cousin, whose body was found in a Gary garage in 2007. (Dane County (Wis.) Sheriff / Post-Tribune)

[Michelle L. Quinn](#)Post-Tribune

Gary cold case had roots in Wisconsin

A Fitchburg, Wis., woman has been charged reckless homicide and six other crimes in the death of her cousin, a death that ended up a cold case in Gary from February 2007.

Fitchburg Police Lt. Todd Stetzer said Tuesday the Gary Police Department received a call from a female relative of Taylin M. Hill, 50, of Fitchburg, sometime in August regarding the death, which was classified as "Lake County Jane Doe." Gary officers contacted Fitchburg two weeks ago, and Fitchburg officers arrested Hill Sept. 10. The victim, Erika Hill, was 15 at the time.

The Gary Police Department found Erika Hill's body in the 200 block of Polk Street on Feb. 26, 2007, according to Gary Police Lt. Dawn Westerfield. At the time, the Lake County Coroner's office declared Hill's death a homicide, noting she had more than 170 healing injuries and scars, police said.

In August, a woman claiming to have first-hand knowledge about the death contacted Gary Detective Lorenzo Davis, Westerfield said. The woman, identified in the criminal complaint as KMH, identified Jane Doe as her cousin, Erika Hill, and knew where she was found in Gary.

KMH also told Davis Erika Hill wasn't killed in Gary, but in Fitchburg. Taylin Hill, who had been raising Erika, had severely abused the girl and ended up killing her, and she and KMH brought the body to Gary to cover up the crime, Westerfield said.

In taped interview with Davis, KMH said Taylin Hill forced her to help dispose of the body and threatened to harm KMH if she ever said anything. KMH did, however, conduct an Internet search to see if Erika Hill had ever been found, and she found a flyer listing Erika as a Jane Doe, and started contacting Gary Police, Westerfield said.

Taylin Hill has been charged with six counts of Intentional Child Abuse-Bodily Harm and First Degree Reckless Homicide. Stetzer called the 20-page criminal complaint against Taylin Hill "extremely detailed and graphic."

Michelle L. Quinn is a freelance reporter with the Post-Tribune.

Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-gary-cold-case-st-09216-20150915-story.html>

Doe Network Case 176UFIN

Jane Doe in Indiana becomes Fitchburg homicide; woman charged in 2007 death

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Erika Antoinette Hill was 15 years old when she disappeared in 2007 from the home in Fitchburg where had she lived with her cousins and adoptive mother.

The same year, the unidentified body of a young African-American woman was found in a garage in Gary, Indiana. For years, she remained the "Lake County Jane Doe."

The two mysteries, seemingly far apart from one another, became linked this summer, when Erika's cousin, for years keeping a terrible secret, contacted police in Gary and said she knew the identity of Jane Doe, because she had helped put Erika's body in that garage, according to a criminal complaint filed in Dane County Circuit Court.

The person alleged to have ordered the woman and her siblings to move Erika's body was her mother, Taylin M. Hill, 50, of Madison, who on Monday was charged with first-degree reckless homicide for Erika's death. Hill also faces six counts of child abuse.

Hill, a Madison School District substitute special education assistant, was arrested on Thursday. She appeared in court Monday wearing suicide prevention clothing and was jailed on \$500,000 bail. She will appear in court for a preliminary hearing next week.

Fitchburg police Lt. Todd Stetzer said it was unexpected when the case was brought to them by Gary police.

"It was a surprise, when a crime was committed that we didn't know about," said Stetzer. "It's shocking that it went on so long before it came out."

He called it a "very sad and disturbing case, not only for the victim but for the other children involved in the abuse." Disturbing, he said, not only because of the abuse and Erika's death, but because Fitchburg police were never contacted by anyone asking them to see if they could find Erika.

A discovery, a secret

The 20-page criminal complaint details Erika's death and steps allegedly taken to dispose of her body, and of the threat that Hill's daughter said Hill issued to keep her children from telling anyone what had happened to Erika.

According to the complaint:

On Feb. 26, 2007, two brothers driving through an alley in Gary noticed what appeared to be two burned legs inside a garage. Finding a body, they called police.

The coroner found burns all over the body, but no sign of scorching in the garage. More than 170 healing injuries and scars were on the body. The cause of death, though, was suffocation due to a cloth stuffed into the unidentified person's mouth. There were also blunt force injuries and stab wounds. Her teeth had also been broken.

On Aug. 7, 2015, Gary police Detective Lorenzo Davis Jr. was contacted by Hill's 25-year-old daughter, identified in the complaint only by initials.

She said she was 17 when her mother had murdered Erika, and that she and two of her siblings had helped her take the body first to the Chicago area, and then to Gary, to dispose of it.

The woman told police that, in part prompted by discussions with a therapist about Erika, she had looked up missing persons cases in Indiana and said Erika looked like the person depicted in one of the cases she found.

She told police that Hill had adopted Erika after Erika's great aunt, who had been caring for her, died in 2001 in Joliet, Illinois. Hill is a cousin of Erika's birth mother.

The woman took Gary police to the garage where she said she and her siblings, under Hill's orders, had taken Erika's body.

Although she said she hadn't been back to the garage since then, and didn't know Gary at all, police told her she had taken them to the right place.

She said that in February 2007, she and her two siblings lived on Red Arrow Trail in Fitchburg, along with her cousin, Erika. Hill, she said, was very physically abusive to all of the children, but especially to Erika, who seemingly "could do no right."

The children were all removed from school at times to hide the scars of their abuse, she said. There was even an episode in which her mother had taken Erika to urgent care after striking her hand with a hammer but took her home after urgent care staff had asked that Erika change into an examination gown.

By February 2007, she said, Erika had been beaten and starved so much that she appeared "gray."

The night Erika died, Hill's daughter said, Hill had pulled the woman and her sister away from their jobs at Culver's because of a family emergency. Hill told her daughter to go into the bathroom, but didn't say why.

When she went in, she found Erika on the floor, unresponsive and cold. She confronted her mother, asking, "What did you do to her?"

Erika's body was left in the bathroom overnight, and the next day her mother made the woman and her two siblings carry Erika's body downstairs and set her atop a chest freezer. She said her mother pulled some of Erika's teeth to help conceal her identity.

A couple of days later, Hill had her children put Erika's body into the family van, then drove to Chicago, driving around for a few hours to find a suitable place to put her body.

She put it under an overpass, lit it on fire and they returned to Madison.

Later, the woman said, her mother expressed concern about an elderly person finding the body and having a heart attack, so they went back to Chicago, found it where they had left it and took it to Gary.

The woman said she and her siblings complied with their mother out of fear.

She said they were told that if they told anyone, they would be next. They were also instructed to tell anyone who asked about Erika that she had returned to Joliet to be with family.

The woman said she told an ex-boyfriend about her cousin at one time, but she didn't think he believed her.

She had also told another cousin through Facebook, and that cousin was checking on Erika's whereabouts.

After Erika's death, she said, her mother became somewhat less abusive toward her and her siblings, using her hands instead of objects to strike them.

Story checks out

She said she never talked with her mother about Erika, but in May 2015 began looking into whether Erika's body had ever been found. When she found the listing of the Jane Doe in Gary, she said, she called police there and eventually reached Davis.

Fitchburg police checked school and medical records to see whether they matched the woman's story. They found that Erika had been withdrawn from Wright Middle School in October 2004 and never went back to school. Hill told the district that Erika had moved to another state, but no other school had contacted the district about Erika enrolling elsewhere.

They also found a record from Dean Urgent Care corroborating Erika's untreated hand injury in 2004.

Dane County Human Services staff also investigated after school staff asked Erika about scars and scratches on her body, but they were unable to contact Hill and concluded she had left town.

Hill worked as a special education assistant or substitute assistant in the Madison School District from 1998 until taking a leave of absence in October 2004. Her employment officially ended in 2006 when she didn't return from leave.

But according to district records, she came back to work as a substitute special education assistant in December 2013, and still held that job until her arrest on Thursday. District spokeswoman Rachel Strauch-Nelson said that Hill has been placed on leave pending the outcome of the case against her.

Source: http://host.madison.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/jane-doe-in-indiana-becomes-fitchburg-homicide-woman-charged-in/article_bdcc792a-7583-5384-bb24-31eac70f5f60.html

Wisconsin woman charged in 2007 Gary cold case



Investigators say Taylin Hill killed a teenager in Wisconsin and dumped her body in Gary in 2007.



By [Karen Jordan](#)

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GARY, Ind. (WLS) --

Eight years after a body was found in Gary, police said they have solved a murder that stretched over two state lines.

The body was found in Gary, but police said Tuesday night that the murder was committed in Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

Gary's serial killer prompted police to take another look at all their unsolved female homicides. It

generated a new lead for in an 8-year-old case and led to the arrest of a woman who investigators said had been terrorizing her family for years.

Erica Hill had been Jane Doe since her body was found in 2007, stashed in a Gary garage, beaten, strangled and burned.

"It pretty much bothered all the detectives and we went above and beyond. From here to Michigan, you name it. We did everything in the Midwest to get her identified," said Det. Lorenzo Davis, Gary Police Dept.

Det. Davis worked the case from the beginning, reaching out to the Lake County coroner's office to make an image reconstructing her partially burned face and putting it on the website for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. But time kept passing without leads.

"I mean, you never give up. You always figure that eventually one day something will happen," Det. Davis said.

Gary police re-released the sketch recently. It was seen by a relative of the victim who identified Erica Hill, and also detailed her sad life filled with abuse at the hands of her aunt.

Hill was 15, living with Taylin Hill, age 50, in Madison, Wisconsin. Investigators said she killed the teenager and dumped her body in Gary.

The new details led investigators to charge Hill with multiple counts of abuse and first degree murder.

They also hope other family members who may have been abused by Hill can start to heal.

"It was a sign of relief. It was also a sign that we can bring the family closure," Det. Davis said.

The family member who identified Erica Hill had been holding on to a terrible secret: Taylin Hill forced her to help dispose of the teenager's body.

Investigators said the relative, who does not face charges, had been fearful all these years of retaliation if she told, but decided she wanted to end the pattern of abuse.

Source: <http://abc7chicago.com/news/wisconsin-woman-charged-in-2007-gary-cold-case-/986233/>