

Remains from a mother-daughter cold case were found nearly 24 years later, after a deathbed confession from the suspect



Susan Gail Carter, left, and her daughter, Natasha "Alex" Carter are pictured in a split image. (FBI via CNN Newsource)

Published April 25, 2024 7:49 a.m. CDT

A West Virginia father is getting some sense of closure after authorities found the remains of his young daughter and her mother following a deathbed confession from the man believed to have fatally shot them nearly two decades ago.

Benjamin Hatfield, the prosecuting attorney for Raleigh County, called it “a bit of a poetic ending that not even I could write,” during a news conference Tuesday.

In a “detailed, undeniable, unconflicted” deathbed confession to one of the investigators in the case earlier this month, Larry Webb admitted to fatally shooting Natasha “Alex” Carter, who was 10 at the time, and her mother, Susan Carter, nearly 24 years ago, Hatfield said.

In 2000, the Carters were living at Webb’s home, authorities said. Webb told the investigator some of his cash in the home went missing, and Webb suspected Susan Carter had “spent a lot of money. They had an argument about it and he shot her,” Hatfield continued. Webb said he felt he then had no choice but to shoot Alex, “to avoid detection for having killed Susan.”

Webb told the investigator he stored their bodies in the basement of his home and over the course of two nights, dug a shallow grave in the woods on his property, Hatfield said, where he buried the pair together.

Alex’s father, Rick Lafferty, said Tuesday it was “kind of a sad day, but also a happy day because I could bring my baby home.”

“It’s been about 24 years and this case went cold so many times,” Lafferty added. “Almost lost hope several times.”

Webb had been a suspect from the start of the investigation, authorities said.

In October 2023, Webb was indicted for first-degree murder in Alex’s death, but neither Carter nor Alex’s bodies had been found at the time. Prior to the indictment, investigators had DNA evidence and witness statements, Hatfield said.

But after the indictment, “due to the health of Larry Webb, the court proceedings were delayed for various reasons. He was moved to a nursing home. We had issues with transport,” Hatfield said. “We had issues with securing his medical clearance to be incarcerated. ... It was a bit difficult to move through the court process in the early stages.”

Ahead of a court date earlier this month, one of the investigators was able to speak with Webb at his nursing home facility, according to Hatfield. Webb confessed to the killings, detailing his motive and the location of the bodies in the back of his property, Hatfield said.

“The confession aligned with exactly the investigative efforts and the evidence collected” by authorities, Hatfield noted.

Authorities began excavation efforts on April 9, according to Hatfield, but it was a “difficult process” as Webb’s description of the location “was limited” and “clouded by memory and by physical and mental health at that time.”

That day, investigators brought Webb to the dig site, but his health had deteriorated so badly, it proved to be fruitless, they said.

Webb was transferred from the hospice unit at the Mount Olive Correctional Complex, where he was incarcerated, to Montgomery General Hospital, where he died Monday morning, Hatfield said.

Hours later, the bodies of Susan and Alex Carter were found, Hatfield said.

The investigation is ongoing and the remains are with the coroner’s office, authorities said.

On Tuesday, Lafferty offered some advice for anyone who finds themselves in his position: “Just never give up. Never give up hope of finding your child.”

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/remains-from-a-mother-daughter-cold-case-were-found-nearly-24-years-later-after-a-deathbed-confession-from-the-suspect-1.6861360>