

The Multnomah County Sheriff's Cold Case Team is interested in speaking with anyone who has information relating to this homicide.

Please contact investigators Karl Hutchison or Bob Boertien at 503-251-2449 or call the tip line at 503-251-2404.



Elaine Doreen Johnson

Johnson, 34, was found by her sister murdered in her home in the 1500 block of Southeast 143rd Avenue on Oct. 13, 1991.

Personal background:

Johnson, who was single, lived with her five dogs in a home fortified with security bars over all its windows and doors. Family and friends said Johnson would not answer her telephone after 10 p.m. and was very cautious about letting people she did not know into her house. Johnson had not worked outside the home in the years immediately preceding her death and did not drive a car. During the initial investigation, several people interviewed by detectives alleged that Johnson was dealing drugs, primarily cocaine, from her home. The investigation revealed that in the days before her death Johnson was associating with a group of individuals which included an ex-boyfriend, a circle of female friends, her adult daughter and a sister and an unknown number of customers.

Circumstances:

Johnson's sister briefly visited her home about 8:45 p.m. Oct. 12 and reported speaking to her by telephone less than an hour later. When the sister, who has since died, could not reach Johnson the following morning, she drove to the home and discovered Johnson dead inside. There was no sign of forced entry, but there were signs of a disturbance and possible ransacking of the home. Some jewelry may be missing. Johnson may have struggled with her killer or killers, who used a knife to inflict the fatal wounds. The dogs may have tried to protect Johnson during the violent struggle.

The investigation revealed that at least one male acquaintance visited Johnson the evening of Oct. 12 to buy cocaine. He left prior to the sister's last contact with Johnson, but sources suggested he may have planned to return later in the evening. Other sources suggest that Johnson may have been expecting someone to deliver cocaine to her home that evening, but that the delivery may not have occurred.

The continuing investigation:

Significant physical evidence was collected from the scene by the original investigators and some items are being submitted to the state crime lab for analysis using methodology not available in 1991. Someone knows who committed this homicide, or knows who the victim was in contact with around the time of the killing. Also, the killer or killers may have fled the house with blood on his or her clothes or suffered minor injuries during the struggle. The killer or killers may also have taken something from the house, or may have spoken to someone else about the crime.