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Arrest Made in 1984 Murder of Navy Recruit

Seminole Co. Fla., (March 14, 2019) –A Jacksonville man is in custody in connection with the August 1984 beating and murder of 25-year-old Orlando Navy recruit, Pamela Cahanes.

Thomas Lewis Garner (DOB 1/16/60) was arrested without incident Wednesday morning at his home. He was transported to Seminole County and booked into the John E. Polk Correctional Facility Wednesday afternoon. Garner was, at one time, a classmate of Cahanes' at the Orlando Naval Training Center.

Cahanes' body was discovered August 5, 1984, in the side yard of a house on West 1st Street in unincorporated Sanford. She had been beaten and strangled. Using genetic genealogy research, investigators were able to develop a DNA family tree that eventually matched the suspect to DNA found on the victim. Both the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement provided crucial assistance in this process.

“Our hearts go out to Pamela Cahanes' family members who have been steadfast in their search for justice,” said Sheriff Dennis Lemma. “Thanks to decades of persistence from our Major Crimes Unit, and partners from NCIS and FDLE, we have taken a giant step forward.”

“NCIS never lost sight of the fact that the family of Recruit Pamela Cahanes needed to know as much as possible about what happened to her,” said NCIS Special Agent in Charge Matthew Lascell. “Many people moved this 34 year-long investigation forward a step at a time, culminating yesterday in the arrest of her suspected killer and it's gratifying to have been part of discovering the truth.”

“Our Genetic Genealogy team worked diligently to assist the Seminole County Sheriff's Office on this tragic case,” said FDLE Commissioner Rick Swearingen. “Thankfully, the leads generated by the team and the steadfastness of investigators led to the arrest of Pamela Cahanes' murderer. Our thoughts are with her family.”

A digital press packet that includes photos from the scene, a timeline of the sequence of events, and Garner's booking photo is available at [here](#).

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