

WHO KILLED RAY VENERUS?

15 YEARS LATER, MURDER CASE REMAINS OPEN, WRITES STEPHEN METELSKY



STEPHEN METELSKY
Column

It was a cold winter morning on Feb. 21, 2007, when a passerby came upon a rural Milton home on Dublin Line.

A Jeep Cherokee sat idling at the end of the driveway. The driver's side door was propped open.

A man lay motionless on

the ground, mere feet from the vehicle. At 9:50 a.m., the alarmed passerby called 911.

The incident was initially dispatched as an ambulance call, but upon arrival, events quickly morphed into something much more nefarious.

Raymond Michael Venerus, 55 years of age, lay dead at the bottom of his driveway. He had been shot once in the head. An autopsy would later confirm the gunshot as the official cause of death.

Other crucial details, such as the type of firearm and calibre used in the incident, have not been released to the public.

Detective Sgt. Trevor Bradley, who manages Halton's homicide unit, refers to sensitive aspects of a homicide investigation as "hold back information."

"It is information con-



nected to a case only the investigators and potentially the person who committed the murder would know about, like the location of an injury (or murder weapon). Information that can be leveraged later in the investigation," said Bradley.

With many investigative leads over the last 15 years, including two different reenactments of the homicide, nothing has led police in the direction of the person (or people) responsible for the shooting of Venerus, described as a local busi-

nessperson in Milton who owned several properties.

Who pulled the trigger? Many plausible scenarios are being explored by Halton police. Did Venerus voluntarily get out of his car that fateful morning to speak with someone he knew? Or was he forced out at gunpoint by a stranger, acquaintance or by more than one person?

"We are on the theory that he (Venerus) may have been confronted in that spot, either through a conversation or somebody approaching him. It could have been a disagreement with whoever pulled the trigger," said Bradley.

What exactly transpired is still not known. "It would be very speculative to say what that interaction looked like," added Bradley.

What investigators are confident about is the deep-

rooted ties Venerus had to the Milton community up until his untimely death.

"I think someone connected to the (Milton) community knows something — like the person who shot him. I believe there is information out there and somebody knows exactly who did this and has information to provide," said the detective sergeant.

Milton has seen substantial growth and development since 2007, yet police remain optimistic that renewed public appeals on the 15th anniversary of Venerus' death will prompt someone with knowledge about this homicide to come forward.

"As an investigative team, we are confident that whoever knows about it, whoever did it, has ties to the Milton community," concluded Bradley. "You always want to appeal to someone's sense of doing what is right, and to try and get some closure for the family."

The Halton Regional Po-



Halton police photo
Ray Venerus, 55, was shot dead near his Milton home on Feb. 21, 2007.

lice Service is currently offering a \$20,000 reward in this case.

Have a tip or information about the Venerus shooting? Call the Halton Police Homicide Tip Line at 905-825-4776.

Tipsters can also provide information anonymously at Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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