

Forensic artist uses talent to solve crimes

By Paige Austin
Orange City News

Heavy tears spilled from the 8-year-old's terrified eyes. Through his tears, he cried, "All I want is my brother back." The young boy had witnessed his 10-year-old brother being kidnapped at knifepoint.

Officer Mike Streed of the Orange Police Department has sat with hundreds of victims and witnesses, seeing through their pain and fear the faces of killers, rapist and kidnappers.

A forensic artist, Streed fights violent crime by working with victims who have suffered some of the worst traumas imaginable.

"That (the case involving the 8-year-old) was the hardest case I ever worked on. He kept saying over and over 'All I want is my brother back,' and I knew deep down

the kid was murdered."

The emotional component of his unique role in law enforcement motivates Streed.

"I'll be working with a college student rape victim with her injuries visible and I look up and her mom has got her arms around her and is cradling her like she's just a baby, and I realize all they have to go on in the case are witness descriptions."

"These victims are what keep me going," Streed said. "You see the hurt and the pain and the trauma and you want to help."

Streed has devoted his talent, life and career to helping. As a forensic artist, he works primarily with suspect identification, facial reconstruction and age enhancement.

In his spare time, he builds and maintains a family-oriented Web site featuring activities such as games and homework links and safety

tips for parents.

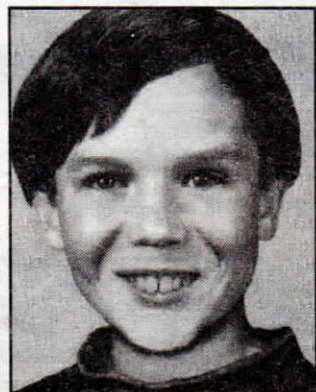
He also works with grieving families who have lost loved ones, using old photographs to create images of how the individual would have aged. Streed said he is the only forensic artist who

does age progression in the private sector.

"I see these pictures of bright-eyed children and think to myself 'God must have a plan. There are rea-

Please see **SKETCH** Page 5

Age progression:

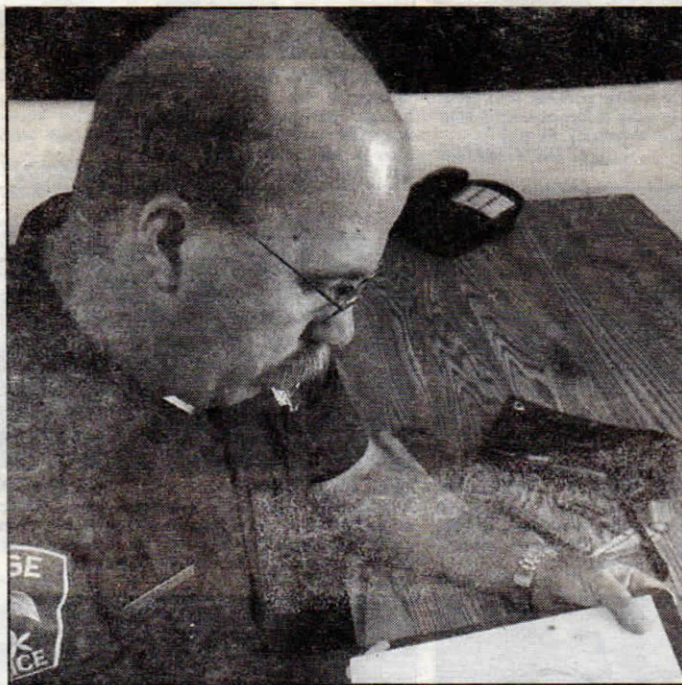


AGING: Mike Streed completed an age progression for a case involving Jack Phillips, a missing child from Big Bear. Jack was 9 years old in the photo at left. Streed "aged" Jack to 12 years old (at right) in order to help show what the child might look like and to help generate fresh leads. *Images Courtesy/Mike Streed*

Facial composite:



ID: The Long Beach Police Department asked Streed to create a composite sketch (left) of a suspect in a kidnapping/child molestation case. At right is the photo of Kelley Beckham, who was convicted in 1994 and sentenced to eight years in prison for the crime. *Images Courtesy/Mike Streed*



STAN BIRD/Orange City News

SKETCH ARTIST: Officer Mike Streed of the Orange Police Department is a forensic artist who uses his artistic ability to fight crime.

SKETCH

FROM 1

sons for these things...' But God it can be hard to see sometimes."

Streed's dad, former Orange Police Chief Wayne Streed, advised him not to go into law-enforcement.

However, he was determined to use his talent in art to fight crime.

"I was the kid who got in trouble for drawing in class," laughed Streed.

Streed developed his talent at FBI forensics courses and law-enforcement courses around the country.

An eager young police officer in 1979, Streed volunteered his services at the scene of a robbery across the street from his home in San Luis Obispo.

With pencil and paper in hand, he spent hours with a liquor store clerk who was mak-

ing change and pouring coffee throughout the interview. He took his first crime sketch to the local sheriffs department.

"I was so proud of myself and they just sort of looked at me," laughed Streed.

Back then, the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Department, like many other agencies, didn't know about or use forensic artists.

Undaunted, Streed began a career that has had him working with law enforcement agencies around the country in high-profile crimes.

"He has a gift and he's blessed with the opportunity to use that talent in a profession that he truly loves," said Sgt. Dave Hill, Orange Police Department public information officer.

"We encourage Mike to use his talents to help other agencies," Hill said. Without his tools and skills, there are a number of cases around Orange County that could be unsolved today, Hill added.

Notable cases:

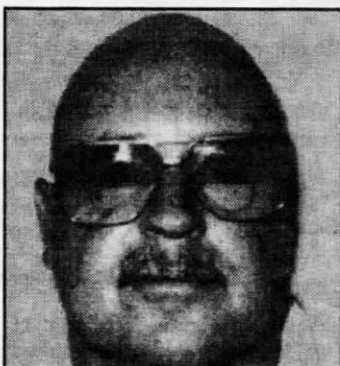
► **Suspect ID:** William Poyner (above) was found guilty of kidnapping and murdering an ATM guard and former Fullerton police officer and sentenced to death. Eyewitness identification and Streed's composite drawing were used to help convict Poyner.

► **Suspect ID:** The Riverside County Sheriff's Department is still investigating the disappearance of Anthony Martinez, who was abducted at knifepoint from outside his home where he was playing with his younger

brother. Streed worked with the victim's brother to create a composite of the abductor.

► **Facial reconstruction:** Based on the remains of two skulls that were found, Streed drew sketches of the victims, which were later identified as the 18- and 20-year-old Taylor Brothers, who had been missing from Huntington Beach for 17 years after a run-in with the Hell's Angels.

Based on the facial reconstruction drawings, the case was finally solved.



Images Courtesy/Mike Streed

IDENTIFICATION: Officer Mike Streed's composite drawing (left) helped police identify and convict William Poyner (photo at right).

Mike Streed

► **Role:** Forensic artist

► **Age:** 43

► **Family:** Wife, Mary; and two sons, Michael, 19, and Christopher, 17

► **Hobbies:** Watching movies and designing his family-oriented Web-site www.planetcyber.org

► **Lessons learned:** "You're only as good as what you did the day before. Improve and better your self constantly."

This month Streed helped Orange police apprehend a serial rapist, who had allegedly assaulted women all around

the county.

When two victims came forward, it was Streed's sketches that helped lead police to the

suspect, James Detroy Shipp. Soon after, departments and victims around the county came forward with details, possibly linking Shipp to six attacks over the last year.

Talking to the traumatized victims, Streed started out as he does with every case. He calmed the women, talking about anything but the rapes. When they were calm and ready to trust Streed, he asked the same question he's asked hundreds of times, "What did you notice the most?"